

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

**RECONSTRUCTING EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY IN THE
SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT: SCHOOL SYSTEMS
CONSULTATION AS A DIMENSION OF
SERVICE DELIVERY.**

A dissertation
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
MASTERS IN EDUCATION: Specialising in Educational Psychology

by

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CONTENTS

	page
ABSTRACT	1
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 (BACKGROUND AND ACTUALITY	2
* Change in South Africa	2
* Educational psychology practice	3
* The need for a paradigm shift	5
* Educational psychology policy	8
1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH	9
1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY	10
* Aim	10
* Methodology and design	10
* The site	10
* The participants	11
* The researchers	11
* Data collection	11
* Analysis and interpretation	11
* Organisation of the study	11
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	12
EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS - PRACTITIONERS OR	
POLICY-MAKERS?	12
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS: POLICY AND PRACTICE	14
* The vision	14
* The context	15
A MODEL OF CRITICAL REFLECTION	17
SYSTEMS THINKING	19
* The systems view of change	22
CONSULTATION	22
* Different approaches to consultation	23
* The consultant	26
* Implementation of consultation	27
SYSTEMS CONSULTATION	28
* Understanding the context	29

SCHOOL SYSTEMS CONSULTATION	32
* Schools as systems	32
* Educational psychologist as school systems consultant	33
* School systems consultation - A developmental process	33
* Readiness for change	34
* Dual responsibility	35
* Teamwork	36
ISOMORPHISM	37
SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES	38
* Power as a substantive issue	38
* What is power?	39
* Power within relationships	40
* Power within the system	42
CHAPTER THREE: DESIGN AND METHOD	45
WHY QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?	45
CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY	45
THE PROCESS	48
* Selecting the case	48
* The site	48
* Negotiating access	48
* The participants	49
* The research-practice team	50
* The fieldwork	50
DATA COLLECTION	51
* The case study	51
* Systems analysis	51
* The content: What data was collected?	53
* The process: How was data collected?	53
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	55

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CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION	58
THE PROCESS: CONTINUED	58
* How it began	58
* Entry into the system	59
* Contracting with the system	60
STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE SYSTEM	61
RELATIONSHIPS, COMMUNICATION AND BEHAVIOUR	
PATTERNS WITHIN THE SYSTEM	65
BELIEFS AND ASSUMPTIONS	71
EXPLORING CHANGE WITHIN THE SYSTEM	76
POWER AS A SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE	80
CONCLUSION	85
 CHAPTER FIVE: ISSUES AND THEMES FOR REFLECTION	 88
ISOMORPHISM	88
SCHOOL SYSTEMS CONSULTATION AS A PROCESS OF	
EMPOWERMENT	88
RESISTANCE TO CHANGE	88
THE FUTURE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICE	89
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 91
APPENDIX	99
DESCRIPTION AND EXAMPLES OF DATA COLLECTION	
METHODS	99

ABSTRACT

This study aims to illustrate, explore and argue for school systems consultation as a dimension of educational psychology service delivery which is appropriate in the South African context. It connects with the principles which guide policy development in education, and particularly, education support services in the country.

A qualitative inquiry approach was adopted, in which case study methodology was employed to illuminate systems analysis and intervention at a special school in Cape Town. The participants included all adults who were employed in the school, with focus on the management, teachers and teacher-assistants.

A variety of methods were used including interviews, observation, role-play and facilitation of group process. A qualitative, thematic approach was employed in the analysis and interpretation of data, extrapolating patterns, themes and relations around communication, beliefs, change and power.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND ACTUALITY

Change in South Africa

South Africa is in a state of flux; transformation is the essence of all we think, feel and do. As our society transforms, it becomes crucial that educational psychology practitioners, use this opportunity optimally to reflect on the process of change, rather than succumbing to the human disposition to move into comfort zones during periods of transformation. This study reports on an example of a trainee stepping out to meet the challenges, and explores and reflects on the experience and emergent issues.

Change and transformation is understood within systems theory to be marked by a crisis, a point at which the system will either disintegrate into chaos or leap to a new, more differentiated, higher level of order. The crisis in education support services could therefore mean opportunity or danger. There exists an opportunity to transform educational psychology practice, an opportunity to review the various options for service delivery, an opportunity to have more choices in assessment and intervention, an opportunity to draw on the various options and combine where possible. The greatest danger is fear - fear of an unknown future, of the uncertainty of how we will cope and perform - and a lack of open-mindedness and courage to embrace that which is new and different.

Change is a complex and unpredictable process and many will argue that this is even more so in South Africa, where the challenge is to reconstruct, restructure and develop, to create something that is new and different. More democratic, consultative and open-minded approaches are being adopted at political levels (ANC, 1994; Government of National Unity, 1995) and this needs to be reflected in educational psychology practice as well.

Educational Psychology Practice

Notions of an appropriate and relevant psychology for South Africa has recently become an issue of concern and debate (Kagee & Price, 1994; Robertson, 1989; Rock & Hauber, 1994; Sharratt, 1995). Educational psychology in particular is burdened with a historical legacy of marginalisation, disintegration, poor co-ordination of services, low status, discriminatory practice in resource allocation, inadequate training of personnel and dominance of state ideology (De Jong, Ganie, Naidoo & Prinsloo, 1994; Lazarus & Donald, 1994). As a consequence of the historical separations that have characterised education, educational psychology service delivery has tended to develop very unique and different approaches depending on which education department the practitioner was working in. A summary of Education Support Services as they were conceptualised in the three education departments in the Western Cape prior to amalgamation is presented below.

Ex. House of Assembly

- * services to schools for specialised and special education
- * services of school social workers provided
- * makes use of services rendered by Dept. of Health
- * Didactic Aid Teams initiated at most schools
- * educational guidance to teacher counsellors, guidance teachers, special class and remedial teachers
- * psychologists work in circuits, providing all services
- * establishment of special classes
- * remedial teachers work from education support centres on an itinerant basis
- * services of itinerant speech and hearing teachers are provided
- * Specialist/Learner ratio 1 : 4000

Ex. House of Representatives

- * services to schools for specialised education
- * makes use of services of social workers from Dept. of Welfare
- * makes use of services rendered by Dept. of Health
- * Teacher Assistance Teams initiated on a voluntary basis at several schools
- * educational guidance and assistance to teacher counsellors, guidance teachers, adaptation class teachers and remedial teachers
- * establishment of adaptation class and remedial classes
- * psychologists attached to regional offices work in circuits, while psychologists attached to clinics are available for referrals from schools
- * remedial teachers are school-based
- * services of two school clinics available
- * specialist/learner ratio 1 : 15000

Ex. D.E.T.

- * services to schools for specialised education
- * psychologists and remedial specialists function on a regional basis
- * educational guidance to teacher counsellors, guidance teachers and special class teachers
- * PIDA (Panel for Identification, Diagnosis and Assistance to all children with problems) system used in a few schools
- * heavy reliance on outside agencies because of limited service provision
- * makes use of services rendered by the Dept. of Health
- * Specialist/Learner ratio 1 : 60000

SMT/Task Team: Specialist Support Services (1994)

[With only 5% of the education budget having been made available to support services in the new dispensation, one can only envision grave consequences to those who lack access to adequate resources. Economic cutbacks are threatening to stunt the development of support services. It therefore seems almost impossible to create more posts, and make funds available to

[broaden the spectrum of professionals employed within education support services, since national finances will not permit the extension of services as they are presently conceptualised and practised (Robertson, 1989; Van der Hoorn & Adams, 1994). It is apparent, therefore, that enlargening the service is almost impossible, transformation and reconstruction of what already exists must surely be an option. Transformation of practice and consequently educational psychology service delivery must be preceded by a paradigm shift at the level of practice and policy development. This is in line with arguments that change will remain ineffective unless it is initiated and supported by those at 'the top' as well as those at 'the bottom' (Lazarus & Moolla, 1995).

The need for a paradigm shift

[Up to now, educational psychology service delivery has tended towards the psychology of individuals, however, seeing the problem as lying solely within the individual does not offer an adequate explanation of ill-health. The reconstruction of educational psychology needs to incorporate a more broad-based practice which decreases the emphasis on individual work, and focuses on the enhancement of school processes. ✓

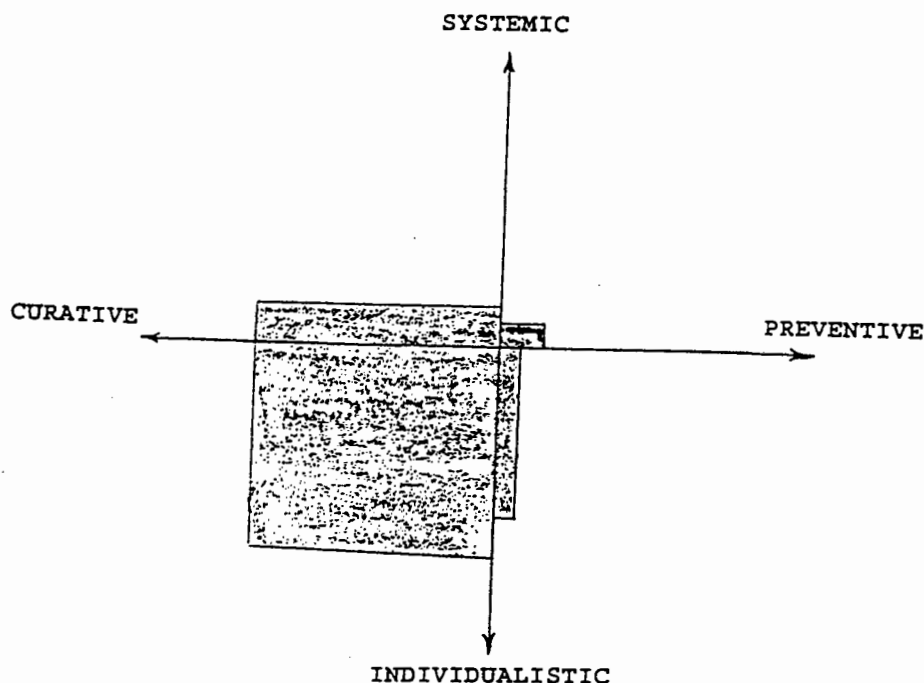
[Van der Hoorn (1994) argues that in order to achieve appropriate service provision in education and mental health, a paradigm shift must be made. There needs to be a move from a positivistic, linear worldview to an ecosystemic, recursive one which should include a health and solution-oriented focus and not only illness and a problem-focused philosophical base.

[Preventive work, consultative work in schools and the use of indirect methods aimed at organisation, policy and the structure of schools is being argued for. Arnold (personal communication) and Burden (1993) however both warn of the danger of services becoming impoverished if educational psychologists do not maintain their skills and understanding of individual intervention. The concerns of Burden and Arnold are noted; the

change process must be characterised by the **enskill**ing of professionals and practitioners - not **deskilling**.

By implication one should not be seen to be moving completely away from work with individuals, or from engaging in work which has a curative focus. It is important to acknowledge that Apartheid education has caused much damage, and it would be naive to ignore the legacy that it has left behind. The work of the educational psychologist needs however to be broadened, to encompass more than the confined space it has been comfortable to occupy for so long. Images of what this space has been in the past are depicted in Figure (1).

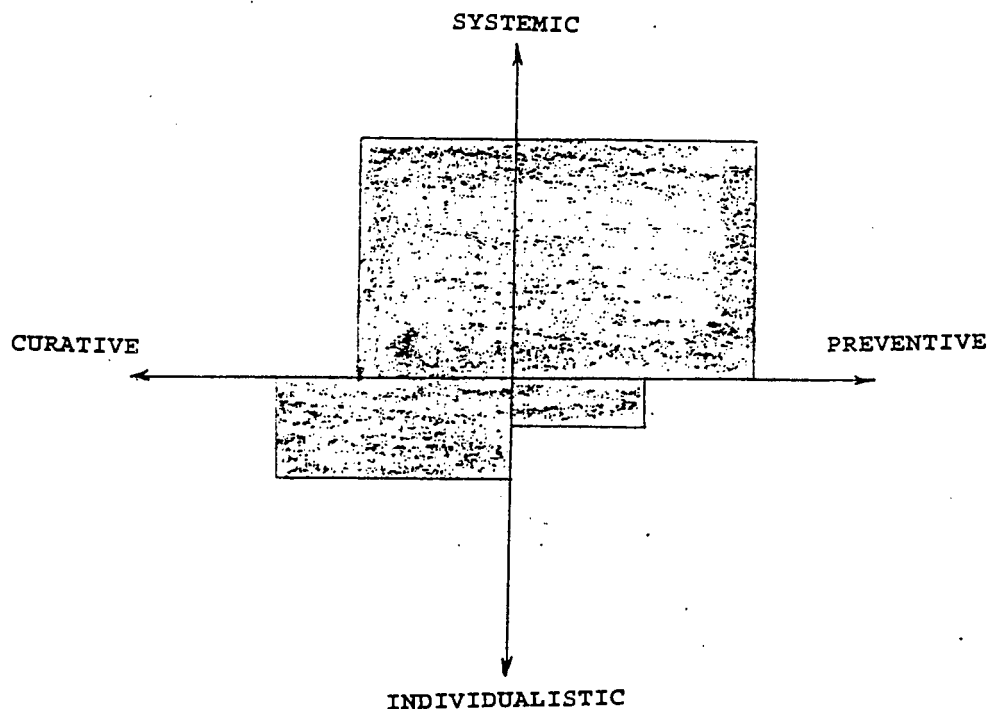
Figure (1): In the past



Burden (1993) asks, "to what purpose can and should psychology be put in schools?" Service delivery needs to move beyond identifying and advising on how best to meet the needs of children demonstrating learning and behaviour difficulties.

Educational psychologists acquire awareness of what happens during the interface between teacher and pupil in the classroom, however, what is becoming crucial is the need to understand the interface between school and community and the broader influence of a school's organisation and ethos. International trends and developments indicate that consultation has evolved into one of the major professional functions of educational psychologists (Burden, 1993). Consultative approaches challenge the notion that school is strictly a place for teaching the "three R's". It incorporates a "whole school approach" which involves reaching out to groups within a system, empowering people, sharing skills and building individuals' and groups' capacities to grapple with issues and understand dynamics. Figure (2) depicts what educational psychology service delivery could possibly encompass in the future, in comparison with what it has represented in the past.

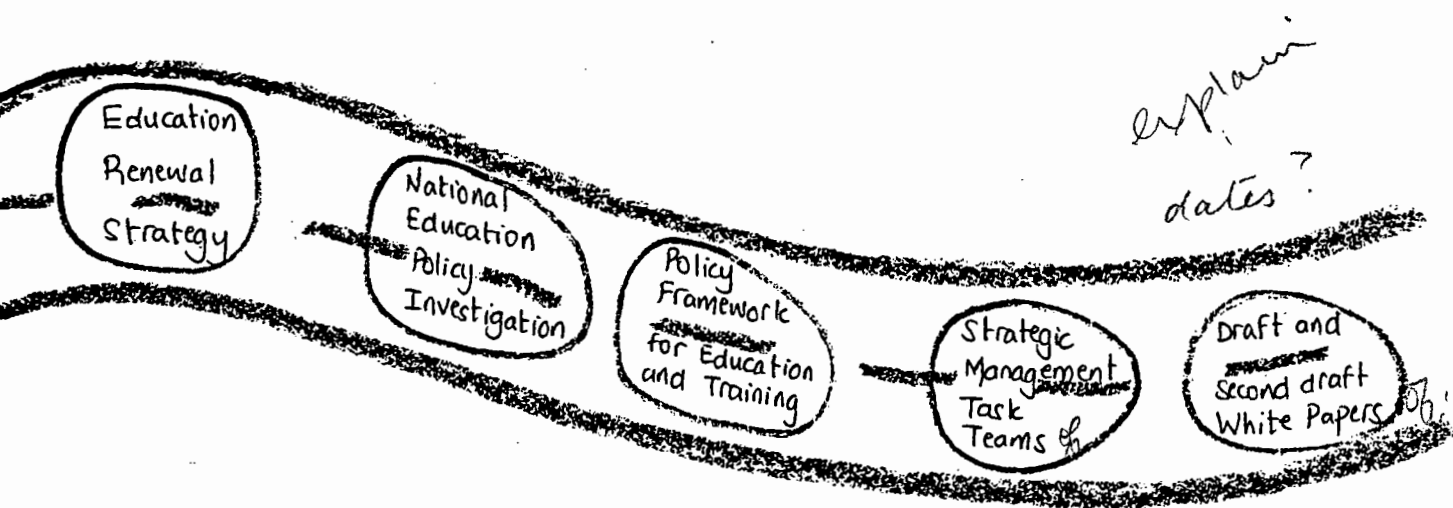
Figure (2): For the future



Educational Psychology Policy

Processes in South Africa are marked by discussion, negotiation, reconstruction and development. A paradigm shift is currently attempting to take place, and is embodied in such documents as the White Papers on education and training (1995) and various policy frameworks (ANC, 1994; NECC, 1993). Figure (3) illustrates metaphorically, the road that education policy has travelled over the past decade. It highlights the process of unlearning, learning and relearning in policy development and practice which is occurring within education, a process which gained momentum with the National Education Policy Investigation.

Figure (3)



Thus far educational psychology has lacked the authority and power to shape its own future, it has tended to become backgrounded in policy debates, notwithstanding its explicit interconnectedness with specialised education, school health, career education and lifeskills (Van der Hoorn & Adams, 1994). It is crucial that educational psychologists participate in these discussions and when they do so, do so assertively. If this does not occur, the fear is that education support services will remain at the bottom of the agenda, and if cuts are to be made it is education support services that will go first (Lazarus & Moolla, 1995). The demise of education support services will undoubtedly be hastened if educational psychologists do not assert their expertise and right to impact on policy and practice at a time when transformation is rife.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

Current debates and discussions emphasise that in order for research to be meaningful it must be relevant, have a human dimension, take the context seriously and make a contribution to the dynamics of policy-formation (Dawes & Donald, 1994). This study documents rich experiences, struggles and visions which are based on the realities of practice. It is grounded in the philosophy that teachers, parents and other adults are not passive consumers of educational psychology services or of the research process, they are active participants who share in that which they help create. The process reflected in this study is "participatory, critical, context-bound, democratic, dialogic, multi-cultural, research-oriented, activist and effective" (Burden, 1994).

Educational support services in South Africa in the past and at present are conceptualised and operated predominantly in terms of cure rather than prevention. Services were geared to students who presented with particular academic, social or physical needs or problems, rather than towards health promotion and the

optimal social, psychological and academic development of all (Lazarus & Donald, 1994: 8).

This study responds to the challenge to incorporate a paradigm shift and presents a systems approach as an appropriate conceptual base for relevant educational psychology practice in the South African context. It views school systems consultation as a dimension of educational psychology service delivery and argues not for a complete shift away from individualistic, curative work to systemic, preventive practice, but rather that educational psychology service delivery broadens its repertoire.

It is envisaged that this research will be reviewed, critiqued, discussed and debated at various levels. It is intended to enhance the debate and discussions currently taking place within education support services, by reflecting on educational psychology practice as conceptualised, understood and delivered.

STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

Aim

This study aims to illustrate, explore and argue for school systems consultation as a dimension of educational psychology service delivery which is appropriate in the South African context.

Methodology and design

A qualitative inquiry approach was adopted, in which case study methodology was employed in order to illuminate systems analysis and intervention at the school.

The site

The site provides an educational context for mentally handicapped (IQ 30-50) children ranging in age from 3 years to 21 years. The school accommodates 240 children of whom some 24 lived in the hostel.

The participants

The participants initially included adults in the system, namely all staff employed at the school. The systems consultation process targeted a focus group which included management, teachers and teacher-assistants.

The researchers

The researchers were trainee educational psychologists who had both taught at South African schools and engaged in consultative work with schools in Cape Town employing a systems approach.

Data collection

A variety of methods were used including interviews, observation, role-play and facilitation of group process.

Analysis and interpretation

A qualitative, thematic approach was employed in the analysis and interpretation of data. Systems theory, Johnson & Johnson(1991) understanding of the use of power and Flood & Jackson(1991) on complex systems were incorporated in extracting and communicating meaning from the data. Focus was placed on patterns and themes, relations, power, change and links between the research site and the broader context.

Organisation of the study

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Chapter Three: Design and Method

Chapter Four: Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion

Chapter Five: Issues and Themes for Reflection

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents a summary of the literature that was consulted and subsequently drawn together to form the foundation of this research. It explores the debates that mark educational psychology policy and practice, describes systems theory and its application in school consultation and highlights power as a substantive issue in school systems consultation.

2.1 EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS - PRACTITIONERS OR POLICY-MAKERS?

Prigogine and Stengers (1984:308) describe the process of change in the scientific community as follows:

...transformation of a paradigm appears as a crisis: instead of remaining a silent, almost invisible rule, instead of remaining unspoken, the paradigm is actually questioned. Instead of working in unison, the members of the community begin to ask 'basic' questions and challenge the legitimacy of their methods.

Much of this applies to the education sector in South Africa and to educational psychologists in particular. There are indeed voices to be heard through the silence - voices arguing for a shift, for change in policy and practice, for transformation of the structure of education support services, and the process that goes with it. It is crucial that educational psychologists acknowledge and accept that they are in a position to convince the new decision-makers that educational psychology has something essential to offer schools.

The national need to redress the wrongs of the past, and the urgency of the reconstruction and development programme is forcing all professionals to re-examine their roles in the light of the national effort (Sharratt, 1995). In the past, educational psychologists have contributed little to policy issues, and decisions about health and education have remained in the hands

of the politicians and bureaucrats.

It is crucial that they begin to influence their own professional destinies, to use the instability and uncertainty which currently marks the profession to create a new order. The onus is left on the educational psychologists themselves, to identify and define those aspects of service delivery which will increase the chances of a relevant and effective service, and to then promote these ideas to policy makers within education.

As Donald (1984) states:

" ...the priority decided upon must determine the nature of the service and equally, the nature and its perceived relevance must affect the priority afforded it. This circularity can only be resolved if educational psychologists themselves take the initiative and, in defining a relevant and effective service, influence the priority that the bureaucrats assign it in the cost structure of overall education provision."

Are educational psychologists prepared to respond to the challenge being put before them? Will they dare to take the responsibility of defining who they are and what they can contribute? Or will they choose to remain silent, attributing their inability to contribute effectively to education, to restrictions imposed from "higher authorities"? Change is imminent, and educational psychologists are now in a position to actively contribute to developing and redefining their professional role.

If this transformation period is to be exploited effectively, educational psychologists and other educationalists must commit themselves to a systematic, continuous programme of in-service training in order to develop the complex skills required to implement change in educational psychology practice. Educational psychologists need to see themselves as not only child psychologists. They are practitioners who facilitate change in

the arena of education, whether that targets children, teachers, parents or the community. If this new role is accepted and embraced, a new system of service provision can be developed employing existing personnel in a qualitatively different way and incorporating recently trained new personnel.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS - POLICY AND PRACTICE

In planning for change in service delivery, the planners are balancing a vision with a context. Neither the vision nor the context is more or less real. Awareness of both is necessary, for without a vision of how the world **should** be, the planners have no way to make plans. Without knowledge of their particular moment in history, they have no chance to see their dreams realised (Conoley & Conoley, 1982:184).

The Vision

In engaging with policy debates, it is crucial that the new ideas and options which are infused into educational psychology service delivery connect with the principles and issues which are presently developing, moulding and creating educational policy for South Africa. The National Education Policy Investigation, (date?) rather than advocating particular positions, was vested in issues at a broader level. It aimed at providing guidelines for the development of relevant, effective and efficient practice and presented policy options which redress imbalances in South African education. The principles which grounded its work were clearly outlined in the NEPI Support Services and Framework Reports (NECC, 1992 & 1993) as follows:

- * non-sexism and non-racism
- * democracy
- * a unitary system
- * redress of past imbalances

These principles guide the policy options presented for support services. These include:

- * predominantly systemic-preventive service ^{or}
- * predominantly individualistic-curative service
- * a focused approach to service provision ^{or}
- * a general approach to service provision
- * support services as an auxiliary service ^{or}
- * support services integrated with general education
- * community-based service provision ^{or}
- * school-based service provision
- * student development as sole focus ^{or}
- * support services directed at all sectors

The policy framework for Education and Training (ANC, 1994) presents as its goal:

- * national reconstruction and development
- * transformation of institutions
- * enabling social, cultural, economic and political empowerment of all citizens

Post NEPI work (De Jong et al, 1994; Government of National Unity, 1995) acknowledged the need to address advocacy for support services. Preferences and not mere options were being put forward. Research during this period encouraged the development of consultative fora aimed at drawing in practitioners at "grassroots" level. This had the effect of making policy discussions relevant at all levels within education, from minister, to director, to teacher and parent. It made the NEPI research accessible and relevant for all.

The Context

The inextricable focus of practice in South Africa, in the past, has been on trying to change the individual to adapt to a system, rather than changing and adapting the system (Kagee & Price, 1994). It would seem that systems thinking, which has played a crucial role in the development of educational psychology practice in the United States and the United Kingdom, (Burden,

1993) is gaining support in South Africa. The policy framework for education and training (ANC, 1994) emphasises that educational reconstruction must include educational change at whole school level, incorporating the development of schools as organic open systems.

Presently, education support services combine preventive and curative work, however preventive approaches remain underdeveloped. The individualistic, clinical approach dominates so that problems continue to be identified in the individual rather than the broader system. Systems consultation incorporates work with individuals, groups, whole organisations and communities, and involves describing, understanding and intervening in the nature of action and experience within and between individuals and groups within learning contexts (Burden, 1993; Conoley & Conoley, 1982; Frederickson, 1990). It is an attempt to integrate curative and preventive, as well as individual-in-context and systemic practice, thereby employing one intervention which has multiple impacts. The theory and practice which guides it, connects with the principles directing policy formation (ANC, 1994; NECC, 1993), that of democracy, ensuring active participation of various interest groups including teachers, parents, workers, students, employers and the broader community.

In South Africa we are experiencing increasing turbulence in our education system. Consideration must therefore be given to the possibility of the following phenomena appearing:

- * an acceleration in the production of long-term plans, coupled with an explosion in control measures and personnel,
- * increasing demands for external aid and advice; calls for recipes for success,
- * opening up of administrative and political positions which will create a haemorrhage of talent out of education, thereby further reducing the pool of expertise and further increasing the use of bureaucratic measures of control.

Rock & Hauber (1994) predicted that nearly 2000 educational psychologists would be required to meet black education needs alone.

Educational psychologists can however only help teachers, students, parents and families if they are appropriately trained and readily available. Educational psychologists are maximally effective when employed as consultants and not constrained by economic and political pressures (Burden, 1993).

Consultation as a form of indirect service delivery would allow educational psychologists to contribute to academic, social and emotional spheres of individuals' and groups' functioning within education, in schools and classrooms. Without change in service delivery or widening its scope as currently perceived, the broader contribution of educational psychologists to the education system is in danger of becoming marginalised. Such change, expansion and transformation of educational psychology implies the need for critical reflection by practitioners and policy-makers, that will develop educational psychology service delivery way beyond its current conceptualisation.

A MODEL OF CRITICAL REFLECTION

Mezirow (1990) and Brookfield (1990) provide a theory of reflection and learning which is located in critical theory, as is the political metaphor in systems thinking which is discussed later.

Mezirow's description of the critical reflection process is captured in the concept of perspective transformation, an emancipatory process "...of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstituting this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings." (Mezirow, 1981:6)

Brookfield (1990) describes the process of critical reflection as comprising three inter-related phases:

1. Identifying the assumptions that underlie our thoughts and actions.
2. Scrutinising these in terms of how they connect to our experience of reality.
3. Reconstituting these assumptions to make them more inclusive and integrative.

These assumptions include ideas, beliefs, self-evident rules of thumb - how we understand what happens to us and how we attribute significance to the things we do or experience.

If one follows Brookfield's definition, then this study engages in critical reflection at two levels. One of which involves the questioning of assumptions about educational psychology practice and service delivery, the other focuses on the assumptions which characterised the research site.

Brookfield (1990) argues that questioning the assumptions on which we act and exploring alternatives is difficult. When these assumptions are exposed there occurs a realisation that what was regarded as fixed ways of thinking and living are only options among a range of alternatives. This is when the whole structure of our assumptive world crumbles.

Assumptions provide the kind of safety for the system and its members as a cocoon does for a butterfly. When the cocoon is broken, not only does it give to the butterfly newfound freedom, it also exposes this young, inexperienced, naive creature to the harshness of the real world. Its survival depends on the strength of its form and its skill to flutter its wings.

Linked with this is the notion that development is a painful process; it is not so much the pain of embracing the new, but the pain of letting go the old. We have so much invested in who we are, in the assumptions that shape our interactions with each

other and the world around us, that we fear the uncertainty of what the "new" has in store for us.

SYSTEMS THINKING

Systems thinking refers "to a particular way of organising our thoughts about the world" (Flood and Jackson, 1991); it refers to thought in terms of relationships, interconnectedness and context.

A branch of systems theory deals with living systems, which are best defined as integrated wholes whose parts cannot be understood in isolation and whose general properties cannot be reduced to an understanding of the parts (Bateson, 1973; Capra, 1993; Checkland, 1981). The decontextualised parts do not necessarily behave in the same way as they do when in context. Transactional processes are therefore the focus, with emphasis placed on understanding relationships and the principles of organisation, not component parts in isolation.

Living systems are self-organising systems, a network made up of interconnected components whose function is to replace and transform other components. In this way, the entire network is continually making itself, maintaining itself and developing. The system is seen to reflect on itself without necessarily highlighting the contribution of individual members. It, and not the individual is therefore the target for change.

Kagee & Price (1994) regard the systems approach as the most appropriate conceptual base for psychological practice in South Africa because it deals with the interaction of a variety of elements. It shifts the focus of the psychological context from only individual to include the context in which the individual functions, it adopts a holistic view of the individual and is seen to be developed by, and existing in people. There is acknowledgement that there are always systems within systems, and that general principles of organisation exist at all levels of

the living system (Checkland, 1981).

It is important to appreciate that the different systems approaches differ considerably from each other and may be best understood through metaphors which enable one to reach a more indepth understanding of how particular systems function. Flood & Jackson (1991) suggest when each of these is useful or appropriate in practice, a summary thereof is illustrated in Table (1).

Just as there are different metaphors in systems thinking there are different approaches to consultation. These are discussed in more detail later, however it is appropriate at this juncture to make explicit the connection between the political metaphor and Conoley and Conoley's (1982) description of advocacy and process models of consultation. The former highlights such issues as power, competition, conflict and interests, the latter focuses on goals, interactions, function and order. Within both models the consultant assists people not to merely cope with their environments, but to effect transformation, no matter how small that change may be. Systems consultation draws together the threads of both process and advocacy consultation, and in this study the political metaphor may be regarded as the third thread.

THE VIOLIN

A sycamore tree cannot mimic the lark. A sycamore tree's
unaccompanied bark.
Is silent until the tree's finally felled, seasoned and shaped
And lovingly held beneath a Korean or Hungarian chin
For sycamore's what makes a great violin.

A sheep cannot sing, the song of a sheep
Would shatter goblet or rouse you from sleep.
But the guts of a sheep when a sheep's passed away
Can be twisted and tightened and tuned to an A.
So what started off filling up the sheep's middle
Ends up as strings on the sycamore fiddle.

Now a horse cannot sing you a musical scale
But if you sneak up and you shorten his tail
The hairs when attached to a suitable rod
Can play the sheep's guts like the song of a god.
The rest of the horse if it's under the weather
Is boiled up to glue the whole violin together

So if you should pass by a meadow or lea
Where a sheep grazes next to a sycamore tree
And yonder a horse canters, tail in the air
Know the true meaning beneath what lies there.
You can say to the kids with a wave of your arm
"What you see over there is a violin farm".

(Richard Stilgoe, 1993)

Table (1): Metaphors in systems thinking

MACHINE METAPHOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * when task to be performed is straightforward * for repetitive production of a single product * when the people in the system are prepared to follow machine-like commands * in stable environments
ORGANIC METAPHOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * open relationships with a changing environment * needs are satisfied in order to promote survival * promotes responsiveness and change * environment is complex and competitive
NEUROCYBERNETIC METAPHOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * promotes self-inquiry and self-criticism * high degree of uncertainty * encourages creativity
CULTURAL METAPHOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * acknowledgement that there are always other cultures which can be contrasted with the installed culture * recognises that cohesion can both inhibit and encourage organisational development * emphasises the changing of perceptions and values
POLITICAL METAPHOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * looks at relationships between individuals and groups as competitive, involving the pursuit of power * focuses on issues of interests, conflicts and power * is sensitive to the possibility of and potential for conflict in organisations * highlights all organisational activity as interest-based * emphasises the key role of power in determining political outcomes * places power at the centre of all organisational analysis * understands goals as being rational for some, while not for others in the same system * proposes disintegrative strains and tensions * balances the systems emphasis on functionality and order

The systems view of change

...a system does not develop continuously but remains - for varying lengths of time - at a particular stage of development until growth causes structural crisis at which point it makes a quantum leap and jumps, differentiates into a model of greater complexity, and integrates into a new level of development. It will remain at this level until it arrives at the next crisis. (CDRA, 19**, 3)

All systems contain sub-systems which continually fluctuate and may result in phase transitions which involve being poised between order and chaos. Fluctuations may degenerate in chaos or become transformed into a new form of order. Where evolution towards higher orders of complexity can occur - this is referred to as the "edge of chaos" (Capra, 1993).

CONSULTATION

Major authors including Burden (1981), Gillham (1980), Jones (1990), Conoley & Conoley (1982), Plas (1986), Reynolds & Gutkin (1984) and Wynne et al (1986), describe consultation as a non-supervisory, problem-solving relationship between professionals of differing fields where the mode of interaction is accepting, non-judgemental and empathic. The aim is to achieve the most effective use of the consultees' own experience, skills and resources, to enhance the problem-solving capacity of the consultee, to place the responsibility for change with the consultee, and develop new knowledge and skills, a heightened level of objectivity and a greater sense of self-efficacy. The process is not always problem-focused, but does involve contextualising or reframing areas of concern and building upon the healthy resources and competencies of those who form the system. Definition

There is a tendency for consultation to have multiple goals which often differ, depending on the needs of the system which is the

focus of the process, and the approach adopted by the consultant. The goals and impacts depending on these and other variables include the following:

- * enskilling and empowering the consultee in order to act independently if situations arise again
- * increasing the general level of functioning of the consultee, regardless of presenting problem.
- * growth and development of objectivity
- * increasing problem-solving skills
- * increasing coping skills
- * increasing resources available to grapple with persistent problems
- * increasing freedom of choice
- * increasing commitment to choices made
- * empowering individuals, groups and the system as a whole

Conoley & Conoley (1982) argue that the key to a consultation's success is an awareness by all the adults in children's environments that children's problems are at least partially maintained by the actions of adults. If adults believe that the system is always in some way contributing to the problem, then consultative work is the most-valued service.

Different Approaches to Consultation

The term consultation has a variety of different meanings and interpretations (Burden, 1993). Educational psychologists engage in consultative work in different ways because they employ different metaphors; the basis is the same, it is the theoretical orientation which is different. Jones (1990) and Conoley et al (1982) outline various types of consultation which may be employed in educational psychology practice.

Mental Health Consultation

Concentrates on the provision of an adult-focused service which involves developing professional objectivity. Mental health consultation recognises that not all behaviour is rationally motivated, that consultees' unconscious links with particular

cases can cause unusual ineffectiveness in their work. Delicate, covert, verbal strategies are employed in analysing the motives and psychological make-up of consultees. Fundamental to the process is the teacher's need for emotional support. Strategies include the creation of non-hierarchical co-operative relationships, theme interference, building skills and knowledge, and increasing self-esteem. Focus is placed on processes interfering with the objectivity of caregivers.

Behavioural Consultation

Here the focus is on the child's behaviour, with the clear objective being to improve the performance of both the consultees and the children. Unlike mental health consultation, one does not diagnose subtle consultee dynamics. A more direct, straightforward information-sharing approach is adopted. Tasks include: defining the problem, analysing the problem by isolating the environmental variables, prompting or supporting the problem-behaviour, intervention which involves devising environmental manipulations to reduce the probability of continuance, and finally, evaluation and follow-up. Behavioural consultation essentially adopts a problem-solving model and requires collaboration between consultant and care-giver.

Agency-oriented Consultation

The goal here is to assist the system in solving a problem. The consultant is viewed as an issue-specifier, group process resource person, an objective, externally based problem manager. It is crucial that the consultant is not regarded as one who will provide content or solve problems, but rather as one who will facilitate the system's reaching its stated objectives.

Advocacy Consultation

The consultant may find her/himself entering a battle-ground where one group is fighting another for a greater share of the resources. The consultant is usually identified as the ally of the underpowered group and is therefore seen to be aiding one group while working to limit, change or destroy another. It is

important that in the process one facilitates the goal as presented by the consultees, preferably one that is beneficial for the system as a whole. Consultants may find themselves being pulled in different directions, making the notion of objectivity farcical. It is crucial however, to remain aware of neutrality and bias and how these may play themselves out in the consultative process.

Process Consultation

Recognises overt and covert events in the system, understands the effects thereof on productivity and morale, and aims to heighten people's awareness of these events and processes and the impact on their work. Organisational diagnosis and action-planning is crucial to process consultation. Emphasis is placed on interactions between people, enhancing the interpersonal skills used among adults, improving on problem-solving and decision-making skills with the ultimate goal being to facilitate ongoing organisational analysis and review. Strategies include data gathering through surveys, interviews and observation, feedback, simulation, process analysis and coaching. The consultant-consultee relationship is described as co-ordinate and not hierarchical, voluntary and not supervisory, based on specific needs and not didactic, supportive and not evaluative.

Process, agency and advocacy models of consultation are frequently employed in organisation development efforts and may become more common in schools in South Africa given the rise of teacher unions and the emerging team approach to instruction, remediation and support services in general.

It is not possible to propose a specific map for consultation, a fixed set of directions as to how to proceed, what steps to take, how far to go and so forth; these process issues and decisions are taken depending on the system within which the consultant finds her/himself, the approach adopted by the consultant as well as the practitioner's own particular biases in terms of both theory and practice.

The Consultant

Consultation entails a move away from the safety of offices and rooms, into schools and communities - what may be described as the "real context". It is however important to reiterate that the shift, which is advocated in this study, will not be as astronomical as it may seem; educational psychologists should not abandon all of what their training and experience has already taught; the idea is to incorporate and integrate. Interpersonal skill is at least as crucial to the success of the consultation process as is content expertise. Educational psychologists must develop an integrative approach to service delivery, thereby incorporating their varied skills, not excluding or removing from their existing repertoire.

Jones (1990) and Plas (1986) lists the skills and characteristics that make good systems consultants:

- * listening - reflection, paraphrase, clarification, elaboration
- * problem-solving - problem identification, generating solutions, brainstorming alternatives, implementation, monitoring, evaluation
- * non-verbals - eye-contact, avoiding nervous note-taking, radiating calm concern, respect, etc.
- * feedback - giving and receiving feedback
- * patience and caring
- * ability to keep one's ego distant from the process
- * self-control
- * enjoyment of the mystery and the game
- * commitment
- * ethical standards

"Insider" or "Outsider"?

A decision which often precedes even initial contact, is one taken by the consultee, that is, whether to employ an "inside" or "outside" consultant. The "inside" consultant may be preferred because the system is comfortable with the individual and the joining is obviously quicker and easier. The hazard of becoming regulated by the consultee system is often apparent and one runs

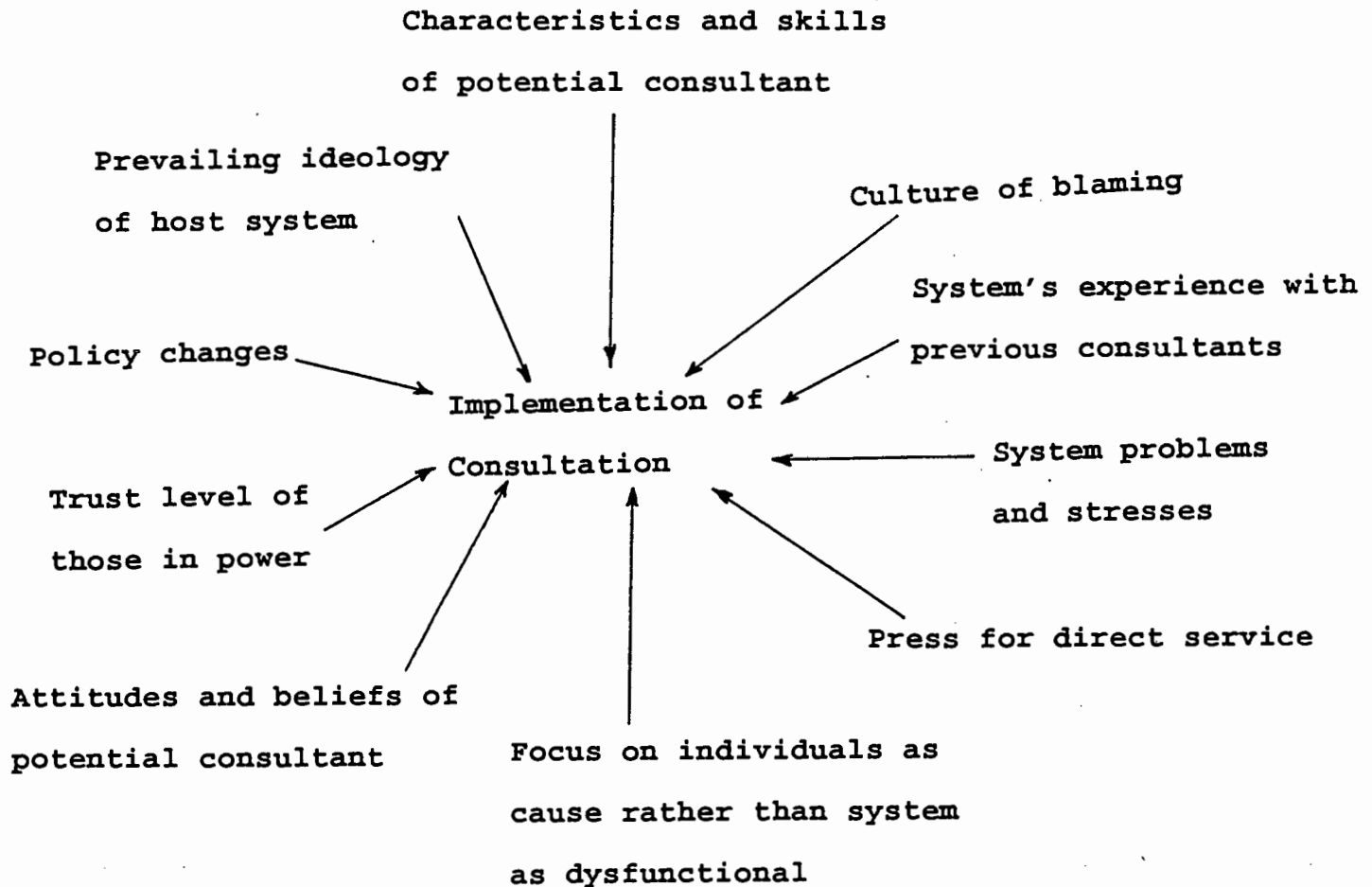
the risk of having the same blind spots as others in the system. The "outside" consultant tends to be better able to provide a fresh perspective on the problem, and often is "the difference that makes a difference" (Checkland, 1981). The greater objectivity allows one to clarify boundaries and spheres of responsibility and increase one's own maneuverability within the system. It remains crucial however to gather enough data to familiarise oneself with the context so that the joining phase is successful. Irrespective of whether the position taken is by an "insider" or "outsider", staying "meta" to a system is what makes for successful consultation; for although part of the consulting system, the consultant is not a "member of the family".

Implementation of Consultation

How does consultation serve the needs of South African education? There are presently too few professional personnel to provide direct treatment for all those in need of service; lesser trained individuals are available in abundant supply (for example, guidance counsellors) and can make effective contributions if in-service education, training and support by more qualified professionals is provided. Consultation also provides educational psychologists with access to a greater diversity and number of problems. It is important to note here that this does not necessarily imply an increase in workload if a systems approach is adopted, given its multiple impact. This option is discussed in more depth in a later chapter.

Education support services appear to be marked by a reluctance to employ systemic and consultancy-based approaches. Figure (4) illustrates the possible reasons for such resistance.

Figure (4): Factors impacting on the implementation of consultation



SYSTEMS CONSULTATION

Systems consultation implies the creation of a network of relationships, a contract, an agreed upon focus with the overall aim of improvement or development. Systems work includes work with individuals, groups, whole organisations and communities and involves describing, understanding and intervening in the nature of action and experience within and between individuals and larger social units as they engage in learning processes in a variety of contexts (Burden, 1993).

The consultant's role is to explore the driving and inhibiting forces surrounding organisational issues, focusing on the circularity of the process in operation and on what maintains problematic behaviour, rather than what the original cause was. Any identified problem in a system is understood as having multiple forces maintaining it.

Understanding the Context

Flood & Jackson (1991) provide a categorization of problem contexts according to two dimensions, namely, systems and participants. They suggest a continuum of systems types with simple systems on the one end and highly complex systems on the other. A description thereof is depicted in Table (2). Complex is understood as qualitatively different from complicated where a critical level of complexity generates spontaneous self-organisation among its components.

Table(2): Categorization of systems

SIMPLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-small number of elements-few interactions between these elements-attributes of these elements are predetermined-interaction between elements is highly organised-well-defined laws govern behaviour-system does not evolve over time-sub-systems do not pursue their own goals-system is unaffected by behavioural influences-system is largely closed to the environment
COMPLEX	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-large number of elements-many interactions between elements-attributes of elements are not predetermined-interactions between elements are loosely organised-elements are probabilistic in their behaviour-system evolves over time-sub-systems are purposeful and generate their own goals-system is subject to behavioural influences-system is largely open to the environment

To classify participants, focus is placed on the relationships between participants, and these may be unitary, pluralist or coercive (See Table (3)).

Table (3): Categorisation of relationships.

	Unitary	Pluralist	Coercive
Interest	Common objectives -a well integrated team	Diverging group interests with the organisation as a mutual focal point -loose coalition	Oppositional and contradictory interests -rival forces
Conflict	Rare and transient	Inherent, but may well have positive aspects	Inevitable and likely to lead to radical change of whole structure
Power	Replaced by conceptions such as leadership and control	Medium through which conflict of interest may be resolved	Unequally distributed thus allowing domination, subjugation and so on

(Flood & Jackson, 1991:13)

Table (4) illustrates an "ideal type" grouping of problem contexts proposed by Flood and Jackson (1991).

Table (4)

	UNITARY	PLURALIST	COERCIVE
SIMPLE	Simple-Unitary	Simple-Pluralist	Simple-Coercive
COMPLEX	Complex-Unitary	Complex-Pluralist	Complex-Coercive

Flood & Jackson (1991) categorize problem contexts as above with the aim of grouping systems methodologies with these. They provide guidelines which point to the respective strengths of different systems approaches and suggest which situations favour the use of one rather than another.

SCHOOL SYSTEMS CONSULTATION

Schools as systems

Schools are complex adaptive systems which are differentiated into a number of sub-systems, all of which need to work together to maintain the adequate functioning of the whole. There are many sub-systems acting in parallel, each acting in an environment which is produced by interactions with other agents, constantly acting and reacting. This sets up a dynamic state of tension which is maintained by internal changes, external demands and interface exchanges. Schools are particularly "changeable" systems since intact, stable membership is only guaranteed for one academic year; decisions about staffing are often made outside of the school and structures and programmes are unstable and unpredictable from year to year. As a consequence, new opportunities are continuously being created, making the system an effectively evolving one. These opportunities are often experienced as uncertainties which are tenfold, given the educational climate in South Africa at this time of transformation.

The structure of a school system is characterised by different kinds of boundaries . These may be generational, hierarchical, gender-based , racial and so forth. One challenge facing the school systems consultant is to determine the nature of these boundaries and the extent to which they are explicit or implicit (De Jong, 1995). There is a need to examine levels of cohesion, the rigidity or flexibility of role structure, allocation of power, overt and covert subsystems and pervasive sets of beliefs.

Educational psychologist as school systems consultant

The traditional role, responsibilities and accountability of the educational psychologist has been extensively debated in South Africa and internationally. A commissioned research project for the Professional Board of Psychology, SAMDC conducted by Rock and Hauber(1994) focused on Psychology in a future South Africa and highlights the need for psychology to become more diverse, accessible, practical and concrete. Presently, psychological services are largely curative with little emphasis on psycho-education training and prevention; only 4,5% of professional activities of registered psychologists include preventive work. Skills in consultation, school-based and community-based work are necessary if psychology intends to become more proactive at a community level in its service delivery. Roles need to be extended beyond that of traditional therapist to incorporate that of consultant, advocate and trainer in psychological skills in community and organizational settings. The arguments therefore tend to favour a shift away from individual-curative work to a more systemic and preventive practice, with much discussion focusing on the need for consultative practice. The role and action of the educational psychologist has evolved to the point where educational psychologists are no longer applying band-aids, but need to project themselves as agents of change.

The school systems consultant employs a whole school approach which involves empowering groups of people and developing their capacity to engage with the problems that face them. Their work is grounded in the premise that both teachers and students are learners, in the sense that they actively construct their own meanings within every educational situation.

School systems consultation - A developmental process

It is important that one is able to draw a distinction between growth and development, where growth is understood as a quantitative increase within the same basic structure, while development depicts qualitative change in the whole structure of the system itself (CDRA, 19**). In schools , this would entail

the difference between simply employing more teachers to make an impact on teacher-pupil ratios, versus the impact made on the quality of education if staff development programmes are put into place.

Given that crisis often marks the developmental process, schools find themselves destabilised or "stuck in trying to solve a systemic problem. If this uncertainty is to be resolved, it is crucial that an element of order exists, for it is the co-existence of order and change that ensures the survival of the system. A few simple rules, which the school systems consultation process is intended to develop can permit adaptation to changing conditions with consequent relative stability, rather than generating fragility in the face of crisis.

Readiness for change

Readiness of the system is crucial in determining the effectiveness of the consultation. Schools need to show evidence of ownership and commitment to the change process, and where participants appear to be reluctant to enter into a consultative relationship, it is important that these issues be dealt with at the outset.

Prigogine and Stengers (1984) discuss how the structural stability of a system can determine whether outside forces can be integrated into the current system to create a new system. The consultation process introduces new constituents "in small quantities, (which) leads to a new set of reactions among the system's components. This new set of reactions then enters into competition with the system's previous mode of functioning" (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984: 189). Efficacy is increased if the system is adequately prepared for the intervention, and is open to incorporating the findings and recommendations into school-wide policies. It is important to note that the innovation must come from and be sustained from within the system - the system maintains the power to step forward or back, or even to simply stand still.

The literature suggests that there are certain factors which are central to the readiness and capacity of a school to engage in the consultative process. Ideas espoused by Burden et al (1983); Dalin & Rust (1983); Druker & De Jong (1995); Schmuck (1982) and others include:

- * the extent to which a school is proactive rather than reactive
- * evidence of motivation and commitment
- * recognition of the need for change within the school system
- * open communication
- * a school's capacity for ongoing, creative problem-solving strategies
- * an ability to use existing resources and new input
- * school environment is receptive and members of the system informed.

Dual responsibility

"In an ideal consultation, the system prospers and grows after the consultant's departure." (Wynne et al, 1986: 34)

An important aspect of school systems consultation is the dual-responsibility taken by consultant and consultee. Contracting involves negotiation of common goals, and the effectiveness of the intervention is determined by the level of collaborative problem-solving and joint exploration of steps towards change. The consultant is not all-powerful, s/he taps the consultees' decision-making ability, they collaborate around delineating the problem and together consider options for resolution. The consultee retains responsibility for determining the scope of the consultation, is free to accept or reject consultant advice and assumes control for any change effected in the system. The consultant is therefore sometimes described as a "development practitioner" , one who facilitates that which cannot be caused but only nurtured (CDRA,***).

It is the consultee who takes over complete responsibility for change and development processes after the consultant's departure. Collaboration and joint responsibility for the consultation process is therefore crucial.

One may view the relationship as existing on a continuum, with collaboration at one end, and hierarchical separation at the other. Another option is to view the consultant as "one-up" in terms of circumscribed, specialised knowledge and expertise, and the consultee as "one-up" in terms of their knowledge of the context of their work. The relationship is one of colleagues, where mutuality and exchange is commonly sought or expected, not that of helper and helpless.

Teamwork

Our perceptions are often interpreted according to our own personal foundation of experience or intent. It is therefore crucial to acknowledge one's own foundation of experience and to remain open to emergent and spontaneous occurrences. As Boud and Walker (1991) explain, it is common for us to read our own presuppositions into events, thereby converting them into an expression and reinforcement of our own assumptions. It is here where the "team approach" is invaluable. Both the "inside" and "outside" consultancy team provide different perspectives and invaluable guidance and direction, as they draw attention to "blindspots" and neglected areas or issues.

Composition of the team is crucial. Consideration must be given to how team members are selected and matched with each other and the particular systems within which they work. Diversity in the team is vital, since the consultative process is not about developing a single mind, the teamwork does not forsake the individual, it is the richness of diversity and the holistic perspective which heightens the impact of the process.

The "team" is crucial to the process of systems consultation because support from others, both inside and outside the system

is essential. Tracking the team process benefits both the consultee and problem context, as well as the consultants since patterns and processes noted in the team often give one insight into the workings of the school system and vice versa. This replication of themes and issues at various levels within and outside the consultation process, is a systemic phenomenon referred to as isomorphism.

ISOMORPHISM

The concept of isomorphism is apparent when two systems are thematically similar, when the patterns and rules which characterise one system parallel those of another (Bateson, 1973; Capra, 1993). One's view of one system tends to be reflected in the approach to the other.

The emergence of isomorphism allows one to employ the same framework to describe and understand different interactions, groups and systems thereby putting diversity into some order. Dynamics in one, are understood and analysed, and feed into the understanding and analysis of dynamics in another.

It is crucial that the consultant adopts a meta-position in order to engage in the collection of information about coalitions, structures and themes in one system and then allow this to guide data collection in another. Taken together, a feedback process develops, such that data from one context informs the other until a hypothesis about both contexts is developed. Previously unrecognised connections between these systems may result in an impasse, the identification of fundamental principles which can direct intervention and further analysis.

Within a school system isomorphism is often noted in the repercussions of stressful interactions or conflict at management level which is felt at lower levels of the hierarchy. One may notice "acting out" and tension among teachers as a covert manifestation of disturbances between the principal and heads of departments; differences among principal and deputy around their

vision for the school manifests in teachers feeling that staff is divided and lack a common goal for the school. Ineffective communication at management level filters through, such that staff describe themselves as communicating ineffectively with one another and with students. It is crucial to note that such repercussions seldom manifest as top-down ripple effect alone, it is much more common to see the patterns as characterising the system and where these patterns manifest first, is often not the issue of priority. Systems are made up of a number of sub-systems all of which are interrelated, fulfilling specific functions in maintaining the larger overall system.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

A substantive issue is an issue or theme that emerges as especially significant during the consultation process. It is an issue which may create opportunities and possibilities or constrain and hamper the process. Substantive issues are found to be significant to various aspects within a school system, and are also apparent across schools, rather than being particular to only one context. What does emerge as different is the way in which the substantive issue manifests in different contexts, given differences in dynamics, interactions and characteristics within a school (Druker & De Jong, 1995).

Power as a substantive issue

"All human interaction involves power and influence"
(Johnson & Johnson, 1991).

"Few interactions advance very far before elements of power and influence come into play" (Cartwright, 1959, quoted in Johnson & Johnson, 1991)

"The fundamental concept in Social Science is power, in the same sense in which energy is the fundamental concept in physics" (Bertrand Russell, 1938; quoted in Johnson & Johnson, 1991)

The above statements were reiterated throughout the research process as the issue of power continually emerged as a significant one marking relationships between individuals, groups and entire systems. The predominantly hierarchical and authoritarian nature of South African schools also makes the issue of power an essential one. It is for this reason that this study employs the political metaphor in systems analysis.

What is Power?

Power may be seen to include the following:

- * capacity to affect another's behaviour
- * capacity to affect another's rewards and costs
- * ability to get others to behave in a particular way or to carry out certain actions
- * capacity to affect another's goal accomplishment
- * control over resources valued by another
- * characteristics important for decision-making
- * ability to manage and resolve conflicts

Power tends to be understood in negative terms, for example, as related to force, aggression, injustice and insensitivity. Systems consultation focuses on the constructive use of power and influence, for example, to increase co-operation among group members, and heighten the system's effectiveness. Educational psychologists have a crucial role to play in promoting the idea that humanism and power are not antagonistic or mutually exclusive concepts. Power allows for potency and effectiveness and is often instrumental in facilitating the accomplishment of predetermined goals. What is crucial however, is that individuals and groups in a system are aware of their power, accept it and take responsibility for its use and that flexible power patterns are employed in a constructive manner, to build effective groups and collaborative relationships.

Forsyth (1990) presents French and Raven's description of various bases of power

<u>reward</u>	-the ability to mediate the distribution of positive or negative reinforcers
<u>coercive</u>	-the capacity to dispense punishments to those who do not comply with requests or demand
<u>legitimate</u>	-group members believe the person ought to have power because of his/her position or responsibilities
<u>referent</u>	-influence over others that is based on their identification with, attraction to, or respect for the powerholder
<u>expert</u>	-power that derives from others' assumptions that the powerholder possesses superior skills and abilities
<u>informational</u>	-group members believe the person has useful knowledge not available elsewhere

Power within relationships

In classifying participants within a context, Flood & Jackson (1991) focus on relationships between participants and postulate that in a coercive context power is unequally distributed allowing domination and subjugation. Their discussion of the political metaphor places power at the centre of organisational analysis. Johnson & Johnson (1991) encapsulate this position in their comparison of individuals and groups with "high power" with those who have "low power".

THOSE WITH HIGH POWER (HP):

- * happy with their situation
- * unable to see how much the use of power is involved in their interactions
- * convinced that LP persons love them
- * convinced that everyone communicates honestly
- * convinced that information is never hidden from them
- * do not act benevolently when threatened by the dissatisfaction of LP persons
- * difficulty moving towards co-operation, conciliation and compromise
- * largely ignore efforts of LP members
- * are more secure
- * attempt to protect their superior power by rejecting demands for change
- * institute norms and rules that legitimise their power, and prevent the alteration of the status quo
- * make the risk of attempting to change the status quo so great that LP persons are deterred from trying to do so

THOSE WITH LOW POWER (LP):

- * feel frustrated
- * experience an uncertainty about the future
- * depend on the behaviour of HP persons/groups
- * have distorted perceptions of HP person's intentions
- * possess increased vigilance
- * have an attraction to or a fear of HP persons
- * believe they have no retaliatory ability
- * defy threats or counterthreats

Forsyth (1990) presents a similar position as he identifies two salient themes in the analysis of relationships, namely, the ability to exert power, in the sense of controlling others and events, and the capacity to defend against power. Forsyth (1990) describes power as the interaction between two parties, namely, the powerholder and the target person or group, in which the target person's behaviour is given new direction by the

powerholder. Holding power therefore increases one's ability to contribute, to challenge and change, to grapple with issues and to understand dynamics. The effect of power is therefore important in understanding the relationships between individuals and groups, to explore the way that it is employed to enhance development and mobility in the system.

Johnson and Johnson (1991) explore the notion of power as it exists within a person, that is, as a personal attribute, and between persons, that is as an aspect of relationships. Individuals in a system need to acknowledge their power, to accept it and take responsibility for its use. This is crucial, irrespective of whether members have high power or low power, because possession of power in a group is inevitable. It is **how** that power is exercised that affects the level of co-operation and achievement in the system.

Power within the system

The concept of hierarchy in systems theory is central to understanding power dynamics within a school system. The challenge of systems analysis and the consultation process is to determine the nature of the boundaries within a school system, the extent to which they are explicit or implicit and the way in which they impact on the hierarchical organisation of the system (De Jong, 1995).

Johnson and Johnson (1991) argue that a systems effectiveness is undermined when the use of authority (legitimate power) dominates, and expertise and informational bases of power are ignored. Within school systems, principals tend to be regarded as the ones who hold legitimate power, but do not automatically hold referent power. Expertise and information are held by all members of the system, with different value being attached to different skills, knowledge and resources, for example, teacher assistants may have greater skill in working with profoundly handicapped children while principals are seen to possess greater management skills. Who possesses greater power tends to be determined by what knowledge, skill and resource is valued most

by the school system and society. The systems perspective of power and who possesses greater or lesser power is grounded in the notion that "everything that is part of the system has intrinsic value; all things maintain a deep intrinsic relationship to one another" (Kumar, 1993:36).

It is important to be alert to political ramifications of the consultation process because it becomes quite possible to be caught up in power maneuvers before one has established a clear position as consultant. As stated in Wynne et al (1986: 33), "becoming an unwitting agent to one side in a power struggle (which already exists within the system) is incompatible with effective consultation".

The consultant needs to connect with those members of the system who are powerful and central to determining how change is implemented in the system. If they value what the consultant has to contribute, it allows for the negation of the usual hierarchy and enables the consultant to work with the system as if it were a peer group, without power relations. The support of top management and staff alike is therefore crucial. Although one acknowledges the importance of perceptions held by management, the views held by teachers are as, if not more, important.

Dowling & Osborne (1985) Wynne et al (1986) specify the power issues which may be explored as well as the kinds of questions that one needs to ask:

- * Who constitutes the executive sub-system?
- * Who makes the decisions?
- * Are decisions made through consultation or imposition?
- * Are there explicit rules related to new decisions?
- * How are these communicated?
- * What are the political ramifications of this consultation?
- * Who are the key members of the system, how will they be involved in shaping the goals and methods of the consultation?

- * Who participates directly, and who indirectly?
- * What are important hierarchies, coalitions, triangles and boundary problems in the system?
- * How is the consultant perceived by key individuals, different sub-systems and the system as a whole?

Understanding the power relations as they impact on the system, and being aware of ^{how} these can begin to include the consultant and impact on the consultation process requires openness and heightened sensitivity on the part of the educational psychologist. This presents as a challenge that must be met.

CHAPTER THREE: DESIGN AND METHOD

WHY QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?

Qualitative research has tremendous potential for contributing to educational theory, policy and practice. It enhances the notion that policy and practice need to converge, that innovations in policy must be attuned to the everyday realities of school-based practice and to the motivations and capabilities of "ordinary" practitioners.

This study aims at impacting on both levels, thereby enhancing the level of debate, criticism and discussion which surrounds the future of educational psychology in South Africa. It encompasses research which benefits not only the researchers, but attempts to directly influence practice and affect policy.

Qualitative research requires the ability to step in and engage, and to also be able to step out and be objective. The challenge for the research-practice team was to create within the system, opportunities for full engagement and for stepping aside from the immediate press of the tasks in which staff were engaged. Sometimes physical distance was required while on other occasions psychological distance was sufficient.

This chapter presents an overview of the research process, the theory that guided it and the practice which was injected and borne thereof.

CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

This study is captured in Stenhouse's (1988) definition of the educational case study as being concerned with enriching the thinking and discourse of educators, by refining practice through systematic and reflective documentation of an experience, in this instance, of school systems consultation. Taken-for-granted realities are seen to be socially constructed, therefore the research is directed at careful observation which leads to the

understanding and elucidation of meanings.

A case study is an examination of a specific phenomenon, a site selected because it is an instance of concern. It entails an intensive description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon or social unit such as a school system and aims to uncover the interaction of significant factors, in order to seek a holistic description thereof. The findings are vital, however not easily generalisable.

As stated in Merriam (1988), the case study design is particularly suited to situations where it is almost impossible to separate variables and significant factors from the context. This makes the case study approach particularly appropriate to this study and supports the choice of systems theory as the theory informing the analysis and interpretation of the case study. /2.

Cohen & Manion (1994) present a number of advantages of the case study that makes it an attractive option to educational researchers. Those which are particularly applicable to this study are listed below:

1. Case study data, paradoxically, is 'strong in reality' but difficult to organise. In contrast, other research data is often 'weak in reality' but susceptible to ready organisation. This strength in reality is because case studies are down-to-earth and attention holding, in harmony with the reader's own experience, and thus provide a 'natural' basis for generalisation.
2. Case studies allow generalisations either about an instance or from an instance to a class. Their peculiar strength lies in their attention to the subtlety and complexity of the case in its own right.
3. Case studies recognise the complexity and 'embeddedness' of social truths. By carefully attending to social situations, case studies can represent something of the discrepancies or conflicts between the viewpoints held by participants. The best case studies are capable of offering some support to alternative interpretations.
4. Case studies, considered as products, may form an archive of descriptive material sufficiently rich to admit subsequent reinterpretation. Given the variety and complexity of educational purposes and environments, there is an obvious value in having a data source for researchers and users whose purposes may be different from our own.
5. Case studies are a 'step to action'. They begin in a world of action and contribute to it. Their insights may be directly interpreted and put to use; for staff or individual self-development, for within-institutional feedback; for formative evaluation; and in education policy making.

(Cohen & Manion 1994:123)

THE PROCESS

Case study research may be seen to fall into four phases, namely, selecting the case, negotiating access, conducting the fieldwork and analysing and interpreting the data (Stenhouse, 1988). The research process as herein described, is guided by this framework with particular attention paid to such issues as the site, the subjects, the research-practice team and data collection.

Selecting the Case

The selection of a site grew out of a request for educational psychology services. This raised the issue of service delivery options, and systems consultation was chosen. From the start, the site agreed to a research-practice approach to intervention.

The Site

The site provides an educational context for mentally handicapped (IQ 30-50) children ranging in age from 3 years to 21 years. The school accommodates 240 children of whom some 24 lived in the hostel.

The site was important because it revealed a great deal about school systems in general and about special schools in particular. It allowed the researcher to gain access to and insight into practical problems, questions, situations and occurrences that arise in everyday practice.

Negotiating Access

The consultancy team was approached by the recently appointed deputy principal of a special school. The request was clear, to conduct a systems analysis of the school, to present our perceptions and understanding of how the school and individuals therein function.

Negotiating access within the education system can be complicated, given the hierarchical structure of accountability. Principals are often regarded as the most profound influence in

the school, individuals with whom one must engage if any change is to be brought about in the school system. A follow-up meeting was therefore arranged with the principal where our task was further defined: we were to address particularly the issues of role definition and management style within the school system. We found ourselves well within the suggestions of change in policy and practice as outlined by NECC (1993), ANC (1994), the Government of National Unity (1995), moving away from the individual towards a focus on the system. The service was also being broadened to explore those education sectors beyond the child.

Before one can work effectively within a school one needs to have a sense of the system. The team visited the school on two occasions to hold meetings with management and staff prior to contracting into a formal relationship. Developing a relationship with the different groups assists in understanding the whole and is crucial to development of rapport for ongoing work in the system.

The contract which was drawn up with the school specified responsibilities and expectations of both the consultants and the consultees. Given that the social interaction often forms the basis of a consultative process and largely determines its success or failure, emphasis was placed on the notion of shared responsibility and joint enterprise with the consultative relationship being a voluntary, egalitarian and collegic one.

The Participants

The consultation process identified teachers as the "client" rather than pupils who are traditionally the educational psychologist's focus. This group was identified based on the referral as well as consideration given to criteria suggested by Plas (1986):

- * Can the group be regarded as an organic, natural unity?
- * Are there affective, instrumental and material resources available in this group for exchange or for withholding?

* Do members identify with the group - for better or for worse?

Those present at the first meeting were able to negotiate the membership of the focus group. Teachers felt strongly that given the dependent relationship that teachers, management and teacher-assistants found themselves in, together they should be regarded as the focus of the consultation process.

The Research-Practice Team

The two researchers who worked with the school directly, were both qualified teachers who had experience of teaching in South African schools. They were in the process of completing the coursework component of a Masters in Education: Specialising in Educational Psychology, in preparation for a one year internship. They had been trained in systemic theory and practice and had worked with two schools in Cape Town where they adopted a systems approach to consultation. This research was undertaken outside of the Masters degree course for which they were both registered.

The "outside" consultancy team constituted a more experienced group who had worked extensively with families and schools within a systemic framework.

The Fieldwork

In this study, process consultation formed part of the request and was therefore in a sense chosen by the consultee rather than the consultant. The advocacy model was incorporated given the power dynamics which surfaced at the first visit to the school. Integrating the two models was imperative, however this occurred fairly easily given the common strands that run through these two approaches to consultation.

The school systems consultation began in August 1993 and extended over a period of eight months. The process was marked by three concurrent activities: analysis at the school, team meetings between the two research practitioners who were to work directly

with the school, and consultation with a team based outside the system. Although this study foregrounds the systems consultation at the school, the other processes fed into our work within the school system and will be reflected upon.

DATA COLLECTION

The Case Study

Merriam (1988) states that a qualitative design is an emergent one and describes case study research as seemingly characterised by uncertainty, where the researcher does not know whom to interview, what to ask or where to look next without analysing the data as it is collected. Research begins with a foreshadowed problem and encompasses an exploration of significant issues. The researcher and/or consultant goes in with some understanding of where the focus lies. This focus is then continually refined as data is analysed and processed as it is collected. In this way the next step rather than becoming blurred is refocused. The process of data collection and analysis is therefore a recursive and dynamic one.

Systems Analysis

General systems methodology connects with those advocated in case study research and include observation, interviews, questionnaires and surveys, groupwork, reflection and process analysis.

Systems analysis focuses on obtaining an understanding of:

- * behaviour and relationship patterns
- * communication patterns
- * power dynamics
- * change and the reaction to it
- * decision-making processes
- * overt and covert events
- * conflict
- * levels of co-operation and competition
- * beliefs and attitudes

The site upon which this study focuses is clearly a complex system, as defined by Flood & Jackson (1991), where order emerges through processes of feedback and self-reinforcement. The relationships between participants are neither strictly pluralist or coercive, and can instead be seen to shift between these two. It may therefore be described as either complex-pluralist or complex-coercive problem context. The types of systems methodologies, approaches and intervention grouped with these two problem contexts are illustrated in Table (5).

Table (5): Systems methodologies appropriate for complex-pluralist and complex-coersive contexts

<p>COMPLEX-PLURALIST</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * begin with an unstructured problem situation * work towards a clearly stated problem and name relevant human activity systems * formulate root definitions of relevant human activity systems * develop conceptual models of the identified systems * undertake a comparison of these models with the stated problem * discuss culturally feasible and systemically desirable changes * take action to improve the problem
<p>COMPLEX-COERCIVE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * various sources of power in organizations * the system's culture and how this culture determines what changes are feasible * the mobilisation of bias * the relationship of hierarchies to sex, class, race and status divisions in wider society

The Content: What data was collected?

The unit of analysis was the system rather than the identified individuals with focus placed on the anxieties which surfaced as patterns that characterise the system.

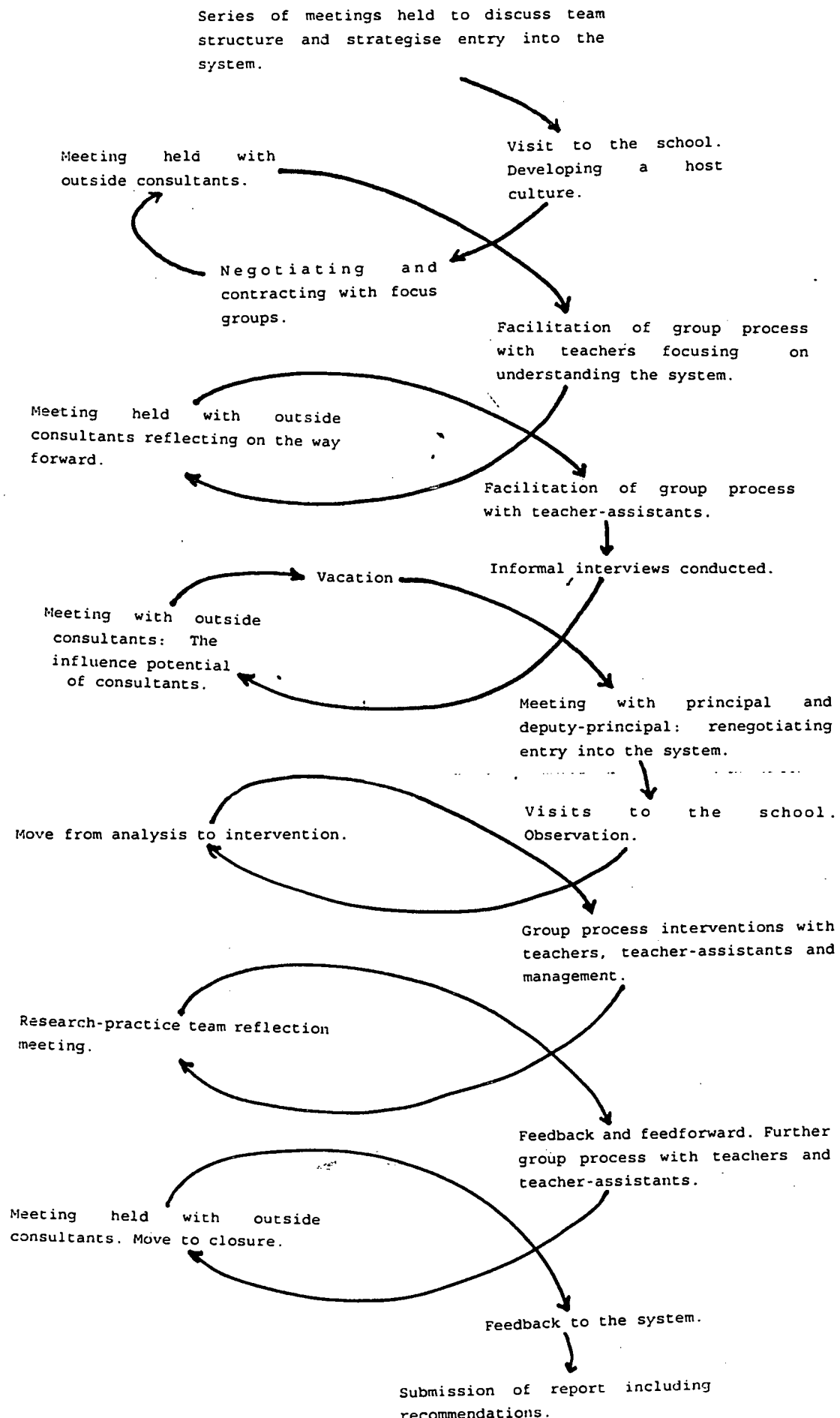
The consultation process was geared towards understanding:

- * The structure and functioning of the system
- * Relationship, communication and behaviour patterns
- * Beliefs and assumptions which lay behind habituated ways of perceiving, thinking, feeling and behaving
- * Power and leadership dynamics within the system
- * Decision-making processes
- * Experiences of and reactions to change within the system
- * The use of language and metaphor

The Process: How was data collected?

Data collection, analysis and interpretation were often concurrent process and highlighted the spiralling that tends to characterise consultative work. Fig.(5) illustrates the shape of the research process schematically emphasising its recursive and dynamic nature.

Figure (5): The recursive nature of data collection, analysis and interpretation



Every data collection procedure was designed to facilitate change within the system, to create new experiences for members of the system and to examine responses to perturbation.

Contacts ranged from one hour to five hours long and included the data collection methods listed below. A description and some examples of methods employed in this study may be found in the appendix.

- * meetings
- * observation
- * interviews
- * engaging in informal social contacts
- * facilitation of group process
- * fishbowl exercise
- * role-play and simulation
- * homework tasks
- * questionnaires
- * telephonic contact
- * modelling
- * reflection

Contacts were documented and comprehensive field notes kept to inform the continuing consultation process as well as the analysis of the system. This data forms the basis of this study as well as the written report which was submitted to the school at the point of closure. It is a document rich with personal experience, it is close to the "real world" and contains depth of meaning presented in a form that enables individuals and groups to develop an understanding of the system that they create and reflect, in order to effect change.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Merriam (1988) explains that simultaneous data collection and data analysis allows one to direct the data collection phase more productively; it also ensures that the information or material collected is both relevant and parsimonious. As data was being collected, the consultants engaged in a process of reflection in

order to clarify the next step in the research activity. This reflective activity ensures that what is perceived, is processed to form the basis of new knowledge and further action.

It was crucial to reflect on data collected at the school immediately after the interaction - to process and analyse, in order to ensure that the next phase would be meaningful for the research as well as the consultation itself. Although the broad area of investigation had been decided at the beginning, the smaller areas of focus were defined through this process of simultaneous data collection and analysis, thereby placing much emphasis on issues that the research process revealed.

Table (6) lists the tactics which were employed to promote rigour and ensure the credibility of the research-practice process and are particularly relevant to the systems consultation process.

Table (6): Tactics employed to promote rigour

- * prolonged engagement with the school to overcome possible biases and misperceptions, to provide time to identify salient characteristics
- * persistent observation to explore recurring patterns and themes
- * regular repeated observations to appreciate atypical but meaningful features
- * consultation with peers to test growing insights, to receive counsel about the evolving design, to debrief and express personal feelings and anxieties
- * purposive sampling which allowed for the exploration of specific issues in a particular site
- * triangulation

Forms of triangulation that were incorporated into the data collection, analysis and interpretation included:

- * **investigator triangulation** - using more than one researcher; a collaborative team with members all researching the same question or hypothesis using the same design and methodology

* **respondent triangulation** - using a number of subjects so as to obtain different accounts of the same events/descriptions of the same phenomena

* **data triangulation** - all forms of data are potentially biased. Using a variety of forms and sources of data to eliminate or highlight bias through converges.

The strategies which were employed to derive meaning from the data collected included those suggested by Miles & Huberman (1984)

- * noting patterns and themes
- * clustering
- * splitting categories
- * combining categories
- * use of metaphor
- * critical reflection
- * imputing plausibility
- * compositing
- * noting relations
- * finding mediating factors
- * building a logical chain of evidence

Tactics for confirming meaning were drawn from Sowden & Keeves (1988) and are listed in Table (7).

Table (7): Tactics employed to confirm meaning

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">* checking the investigation for representativeness* checking for researcher effects* triangulation* weighting the evidence* examining the outlier case* using the outlier case to account for regularity* searching for a spurious relationship* replicating a finding* checking out rival explanations* looking for negative evidence* getting feedback from subjects |
|---|

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

The process of school systems consultation is described and illuminated, and includes an exploration of the processes as experienced at the school, as well as reflections on consultancies that took place outside the school context. This chapter is intended to paint a picture of the school as a system and to tell a story that captures the research process. A narrative voice is used to illuminate the experience. Where appropriate, direct speech is used to convey information. Internal conversations are presented in italics.

THE PROCESS: CONTINUED

How it began

The deputy principal at the school, who was also a qualified psychologist, approached two lecturers at the university requesting that a systems analysis be conducted at his school. He explained that he had suggested to his staff that it might be helpful to have an outsider come in and do some work with the school. He shared with the group of students and lecturers his own sense that the nursery and hostel at the school were of primary concern at that moment, but that he was open to alternative ways of working with the school systemically.

A great deal of discussion ensued around who the worker team would be, and given that the deputy principal had been trained in systems work, his role in particular was problematised. Was it possible for him to form part of the worker or outside consultancy teams? *Could the consultee also be a consultant?*

A decision was reached that the deputy would remain in the role of consultee, but that given his expertise, the consultants were free to share their reflections with him and obtain feedback whenever this was deemed necessary. These discussions typified those which mark the consultation process. Does the system employ an "insider" or an "outsider"? Who can be accessed to widen the

consultants' personal foundations and to broaden their perspective?

Once clarity had been reached around the roles and functions of the worker team or consultants and the outside team, a decision was taken not to focus prematurely on the conflict between the nursery, hostel and the rest of the school, or to examine boundary problems between only these sub-systems, as had been suggested by the deputy principal. The consultants were reluctant to commit to a focus too early in the consultation process and chose instead to begin by looking at the system as a whole in order that they could be guided by the issues that emerged.

Entry into the system

The principal and deputy principal took the responsibility for informing the staff that our services had been contracted. We ran the risk of teaching staff perceiving the consultants as aligned with management, however we felt that it was important to collaborate with those in the system who had the power to support or to sabotage change. Such a decision is a crucial one, with the choice not always the same. It highlights the insight required of the educational psychologist who needs to be aware of the importance of placing her/himself strategically in the system.

The principal shared with us his own sense of what he would like to see clarified in the consultation process at the school. Particular concerns that he held, emphasised management style, expectations of a principal, the supportive role that management can play, and role definition within the school system, namely who has what job and to what extent this is clear for people.

A visit to the school was planned as an informal introduction to the system and some of its members. Each of the consultants was taken on a tour of the school, a colourful and well-resourced institution as the consultants perceived it. Most staff members were either indifferent to our presence, seemingly uncertain about why we were there, while others greeted with great

enthusiasm. The head of department who spent that morning with me shared her own perceptions of the school and the dynamics which played themselves out. This marked the beginning of the data collection process within the system.

Contracting with the system

Contracting is regarded as a crucial aspect of the school systems consultation because it is through the discussion of the contract with the members of the system that one is able to find a balance between what consultants have to offer and what the system expects. Also, the system begins to show itself.

A meeting with the teachers was held where the consultants explained who they were, why they were there, what they aimed to do and how they planned to do this. A teacher asked whether we were there to identify problems or if we already knew what the problem was and had come to solve it. We explained through the use of metaphor, that our work could be compared with snorkelling. "At the moment the water is very murky. We're here to snorkel further and further into the water until it gets clearer", and its probably not going to get any clearer if we don't swim in the right direction. For the educational psychologist, this is very similar to an initial interview in psychotherapy. One asks tentative questions, as does the client, both really testing the waters, not diving in too deep.

Teachers expressed their concern that the principal was not present at this meeting and that he was going to be on leave for the next three months.

Teacher: Will the principal be involved in this? If not then this is going to be a waste of time.

This alerted the consultants to the fact that the principal was perceived as a crucial player in the system's dynamics. It was explained that it had been negotiated with the principal that he would come into school for whatever processes were facilitated that formed part of the consultation.

Questions were also raised about how we would involve other staff at the school. We understood this as an indication that working with the teachers alone would not provide us with a rich enough picture of the system as a whole. It was acknowledged that we would need to strategise around this. This data was triangulated two days later when I received a telephone call from one of the teachers requesting that we included the teacher-assistants in the data collection process. This serves as an example of how the consultation differs from psychotherapy. The boundaries are not as rigid because the relationship is a collaborative, collegic one where the consultant is open to guidance, suggestion and even direction by the consultee. By implication the educational psychologist is no longer the all-powerful expert.

As the research-intervention process continued the consultation sought a clearer understanding of the structure and functioning of the school system and the relationships, beliefs and behaviours which characterised it.

STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE SYSTEM

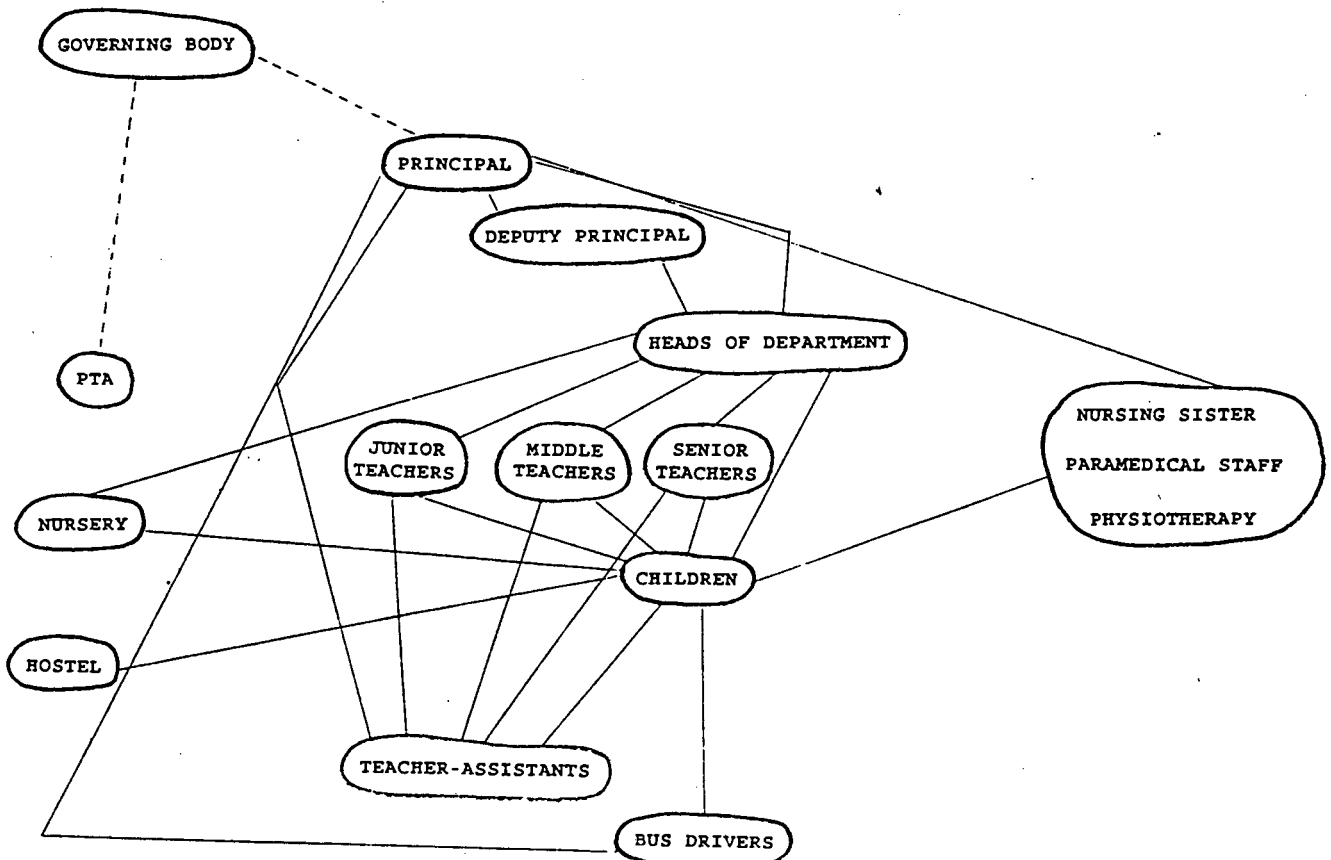
Schools in South Africa and around the world are usually constructed on an educational-political base with clear hierarchy within the structure, from ground-staff to teacher through to director of education. School systems are comprised of various sub-systems, which serve to facilitate some functional tasks and hamper others. Table (8) lists the roles and functions of the various sub-systems which together formed the school system. This table was drawn up based on observations of the system in operation and informal discussions with various members of staff.

Table (8): Roles and functions of sub-systems

SUB-SYSTEM	ROLES AND FUNCTION
Governing Body	- responsible for formulating and adopting school policy
Management	- provision of leadership and overall management of the school - liaison between different sub-systems
Heads of Department	- responsible for the co-ordination of nursery, junior, middle and senior sections of the school
Teachers	- responsible for the education and training of children attending the school
Medical Staff	- provision of health service that includes curative service, physiotherapy, etc.
Teacher-assistants	- provide assistance and support to teacher in the classroom - work closely with children in the classroom - responsible for cleaning and maintenance of school building, eg.floors, walls, toilets, etc.
Bus Drivers	- provision of transport for children who travel to school daily
Hostel	- provision of facilities and care for children living in the hostel
Parent-Teacher Association	- makes policy recommendations to Governing Body - ensure parents are involved in the overall running of the school

Systems are structured by sub-systems which may be either overt or covert and may be organised based on age, race position, status, class, popularity or skill. The research site was no exception. Figure (6) illustrates the structure of the school system, that is, the overt sub-systems identified, levels of organisation and lines of communication as perceived by the consultants.

Figure (6): Perceived structure of the system



It was clear that the child was the central focus, a perception that was confirmed by comments made by staff:

"Staff have the well-being of the child at heart";

"Wonderful commitment to the children and their needs";

"The child comes first".

The governing body held a particularly powerful position and yet was able to retain a mystical air within the system, formulating and dictating policy without much consultation with the system which it governed. The principal personified the phrase "the buck stops here". A powerful man with a great deal of responsibility. The nursery and the hostel were perceived to be somewhat isolated, each presenting with particular issues that were seen to be specific to that sub-system.

"Much tension in the nursery";

"Nursery not integrated with school";

"Hostel-school relationship is poor".

What was interesting was the position of the teacher-assistants who had been described as integral to classroom practice, but were among those lowest in the hierarchy.

This picture confirmed the richness of working with the whole system and alerted the consultants to the reality of how much may have been lost if they had chosen to focus on the nursery or hostel alone. What this implies for the educational psychologist is the importance of being able to focus on the specific, and also step out far enough to see the bigger picture. *One misses the beauty of the changing seasons if one looks only at a leaf, rather than the entire forest.*

The perception the consultants had was that of a complex system as described by Flood & Jackson (1991); what was needed was a more indepth understanding of the relationships between members of the system in order to categorise the context clearly and then select a methodology for intervention that would suit it.

RELATIONSHIP, COMMUNICATION AND BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS
WITHIN THE SYSTEM

The groups which were targeted during the analysis, namely, teachers, teacher-assistants and management, participated in a group process which was facilitated by the consultants. The process adopted a solution-focused rather than a problem-focused orientation and explored relationships, behaviour and beliefs which characterise the school system. The focus groups were strategically chosen based on the criteria mentioned earlier (Plas, 1986), and by splitting and combining categories. Bus drivers and hostel staff were grouped with teacher-assistants, and medical staff with teachers. This gave the consultants access to the entire system and ensured the representativeness of the information gained.

The process was first facilitated with management and teachers and a week later with teacher-assistants thereby building a logical chain of evidence. The group process involved a personal reflection which was shared in a small group and then in plenary. The task was outlined as follows:

Pretend that you went home this afternoon, rested and awoke tomorrow morning, got dressed and travelled to school. When you got here it was clear to you that a miracle had happened. The school was perfect! Write down what would have changed. Consider:

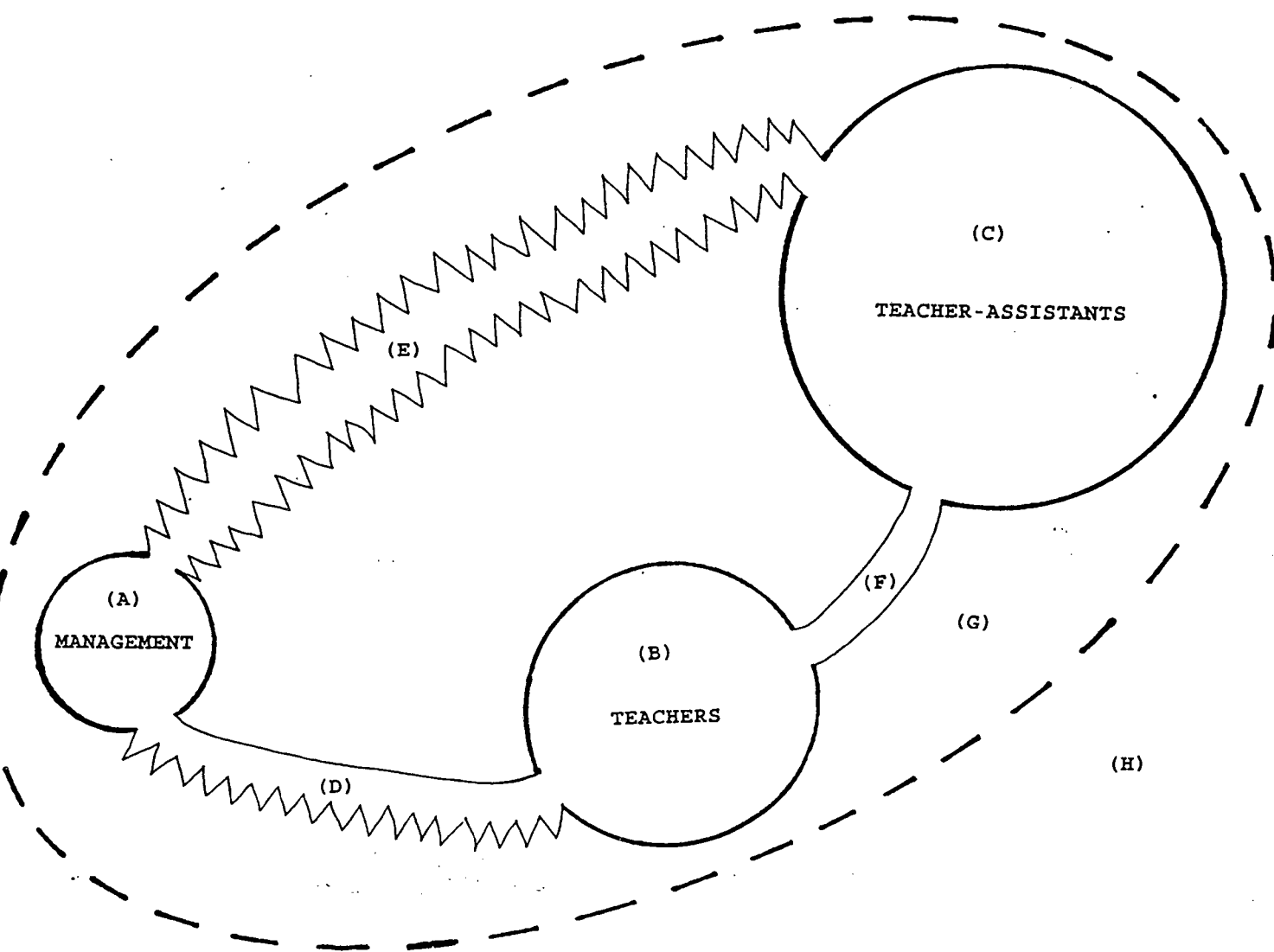
- * How in general things would be different?
 - * What behaviours would be different?
 - * How relationships would be different?
 - * What new ideas or beliefs would prevail?

Add to this list anything that would not change because it already works well at the school.

Investigator triangulation was employed as both consultants observed relationship and behaviour patterns between individuals, within and between sub-systems and between the system and its environment. Respondent triangulation was incorporated as the

process was duplicated with the teacher-assistant group. Data was triangulated since all written accounts were collected and analysed by noting patterns and themes, clustering and identifying relations in the perceptions noted. The analysis and interpretation is depicted graphically in Figure (7).

Figure (7): How relationship and behaviour patterns are maintained in the system



A) Within the management sub-system

A professional working relationship existed between the principal and deputy-principal, with the principal often seeking the deputy's opinion on important matters. During the group process exercises which were facilitated by the consultants, the deputy principal adopted the role of mediator. He diffused tensions and conflicts which the principal appeared to be grappling with. *His counselling skills were apparent as he listened and reflected empathically.*

B) Within the teacher sub-system

Although teachers maintained that they had a professional relationship with one another, within which they were able to share ideas about curriculum and teaching methodology, covert conflicts and coalitions were described as well.

"Lack of trust and tolerance";

"Need to talk to each other not gossip behind people's backs";

"Staff cohesion is absent";

"People do not speak openly and honestly".

Individuals in the group had some difficulty with openness, were guarded and took a long time to share with others and talk through what they had written down.

C) Within the teacher-assistant sub-system

A strong team spirit prevailed, marked by an openness and willingness to talk about their needs. Teacher-assistants were overworked and stressed and expressed an intense sense of helplessness around the possibility of bringing about change. They commented that they had engaged in similar exercises many times before, but nobody seemed to be able to solve their problems. A large majority set themselves up as dependent on a few individuals who were perceived to be more assertive, and now the consultants were seen as yet another option. It became necessary to clarify that we were not there as experts to solve their problems or even to speak on their behalf; what we did hope to do as collaborators was to empower people to engage with the

problems that faced them and generate and effect solutions as a group. This alerts the educational psychologist to the issue of dual responsibility in school systems consultation. The educational psychologist as consultant is not all-powerful, they tap the consultee's decision-making ability, collaborate around presenting problems and together consider options for resolution.

D) Between management and teacher sub-systems

The teachers appeared to have problems with trust and open communication and were consequently unable to express their thoughts and feelings in an open forum.

"Principal should be more approachable";

"One cannot speak openly and honestly without feeling attacked".

There was clearly a pattern of finger-pointing and laying blame - "Scapegoating" was the name of the game in this relationship. The consultation process provided individuals and groups with a contained space where they were able to "lay their cards on the table", to communicate more openly and consequently more effectively.

"As staff we don't feel supported by the principal";

"The principal is unavailable, he shelves problems and seldom is in control".

This points to the importance of the educational psychologist possessing the skill, expertise and insight to identify and understand, monitor and then impact on group dynamics.

E) Between the management and teacher-assistant sub-systems

The relationship was tense and conflictual.

"Mense is bang vir die prinsipaal";

"Principal is unapproachable".

Much of the conflict remained covert however because of a pattern of avoidance that characterised interactions between these two sub-systems. Communication was ineffective with both sub-systems remaining unwilling to listen to or understand the other's perspective. Negotiation, co-operation and trust was perceived to be

impossible because power dynamics were too destructive.

"We'll just wait until after the elections, if things don't change then we must find other work and leave". This sense of helplessness and paralysis is often experienced by those in low power positions within the system. The educational psychologist must be wary of stepping into the role of rescuer, for although the consultant may initiate change, unless the change process is owned and shaped by the consultee, empowerment (a central goal in consultation) is diluted if not completely dissolved.

F) Between teacher and teacher-assistant sub-systems

A straightforward working relationship exists between these two groups. Teacher-assistants however felt unacknowledged, explaining that there was little recognition given for the integral role they played in the classroom.

"We do more than people realise";

"In the classroom, I get my group and the teacher gets hers, then after school I have to stay behind and clean the school. What it comes down to is I work just as hard as her and more".

G) Within the system as whole

The system was characterised by a lack of trust, tolerance and flexibility, resulting in feelings of insecurity and defeat.

"Sooner or later we'll all pack up and leave because we can't cope anymore";

"A great deal of uncertainty and insecurity exists at the school".

Problems were externalised where blaming others was the pattern rather than acknowledging one's own role in keeping things the way they are. Power dynamics made relationships tense at all levels and this was exacerbated by the perception that the system was marked by grave inequalities. Although at first levels of competition far outweighed levels of co-operation, an open communication pattern slowly emerged with some willingness to work together to create a different ethos within the system. The

consultants engaging in research overcame biases and misperceptions and instead confirmed that which had apparently emerged as salient characteristics.

School systems consultation dictates a focus on relationships and transactional processes, emphasising the change and adaptation of the system and not only the individuals found therein. It becomes imperative that the educational psychologist uses a systemic lens through which they observe behaviour. This would dictate that one looks beyond the individuals and focuses on the interaction between them.

In terms of Flood & Jackson's (1991) categorisation of relationships between members of the system, the analysis revealed that relationships were neither strictly pluralist or coercive, and appeared instead to shift between these two. The school system was therefore categorised as a complex-pluralist and complex-coercive context which implied the use of systems methodologies in the intervention.

BELIEFS AND ASSUMPTIONS

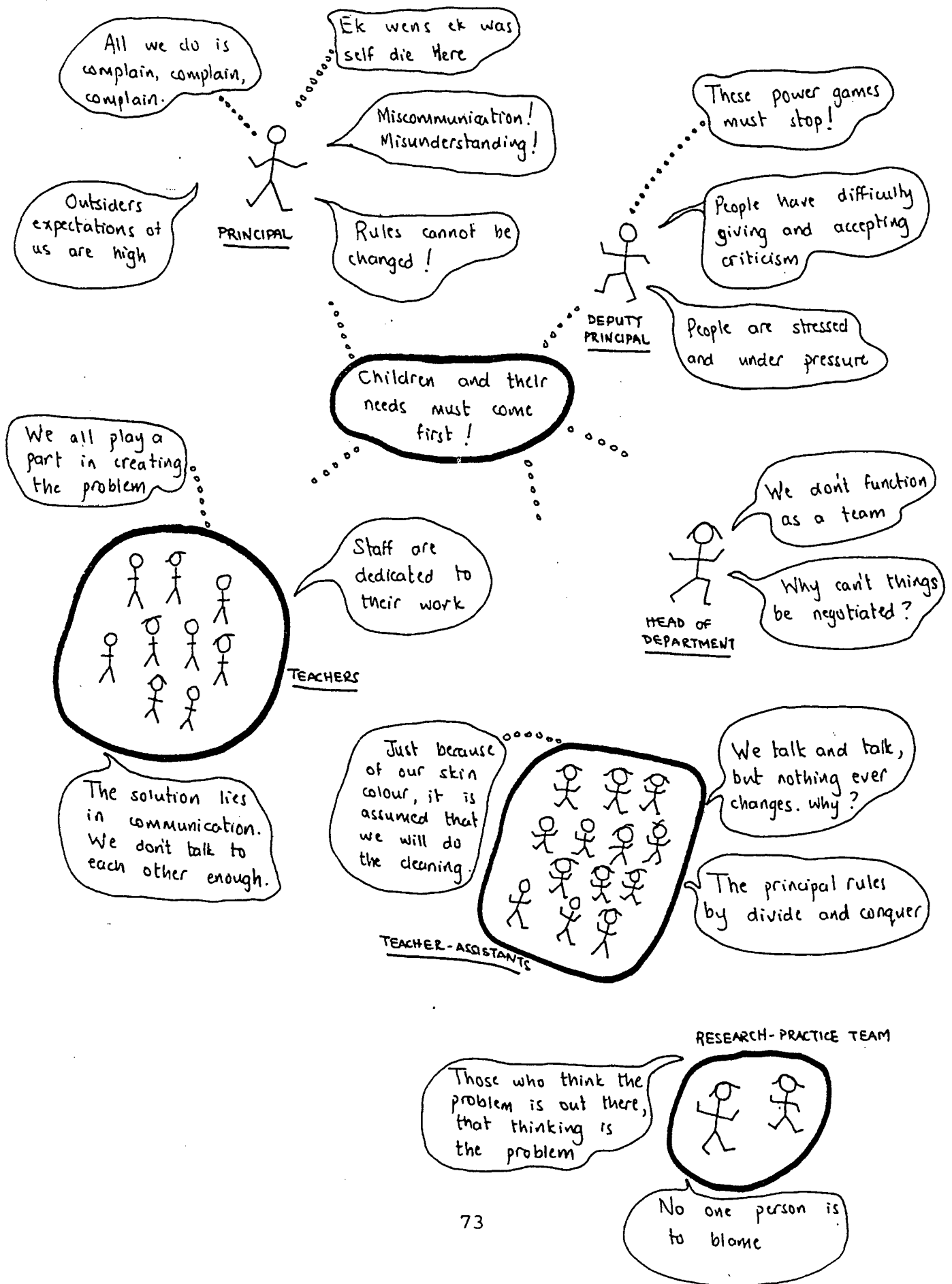
Becoming aware of why we attach certain meanings to the things we do, our roles and relationships is crucial if development and change is to take place. Schools are marked by well-articulated belief systems that strongly influence relationships and behaviour, in fact, the system's functioning on the whole. These beliefs or meanings present themselves as ideas and self-evident rules of thumb and are often misconstrued out of myth and conventional wisdom. It is important that they are examined and where necessary reconstituted.

The consultation process was grounded in Mezirow (1990) and Brookefield's (1990) work, and encouraged sub-systems within the school to become critically aware of their own assumptions. Having already gained some information about beliefs which characterise the system, the consultants set up two follow-up

processes which sought to confirm and develop the information that had been gained up to this point. Management was asked to participate in a fishbowl exercise (See appendix for description of a fishbowl exercise) with teachers and teacher-assistants on different occasions, focusing on similar issues. This illustrates the use of respondent and data triangulation in the data collection process. It also points to the consultants' prolonged engagement not only with the system, physically, but with the issues that gave the system life, intellectually and emotionally. This reiterates the need for educational psychologists to move away from the safety of their rooms and offices, into the "field", to schools where the reality is experienced.

The fishbowl exercise provided the first opportunity for the consultee to obtain feedback on the patterns that had been noted thus far. The process was constructed such that management and teachers would engage in a conversation that allowed for assumptions to be connected with reality. This constitutes Brookefield's (1990) second phase of critical reflection. Figure (8) depicts the beliefs and assumptions which underlie the interactions, behaviours and communication patterns which emerged in the analysis of the system.

Figure (8): Beliefs and Assumptions



Assumptions about change and development were grounded in the need to change individuals rather than the interaction or relationship. Groups within the system were reluctant to acknowledge multiplicity and interconnectedness, that is that problems and their solutions are activated at a number of points and that different individuals and groups together contribute to maintaining problems or devising solutions. A pattern of blaming marked communication and behaviour, with the principal as the target. People expressed the belief that if the principal resigned or was ousted, then everything would be fine. This was apparent in such comments as:

"He's rude to us";

"He has an attitude problem";

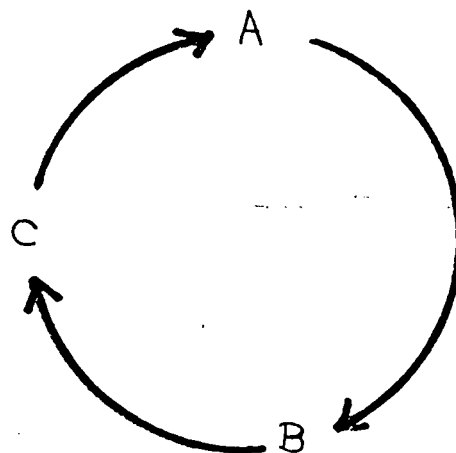
"Principal should be more approachable";

"Principal doesn't know what's going on";

"The principal shelves problems and refuses to take responsibility".

The consultants at this point stepped in to spotlight the blaming cycle. We shared with the group the systems theory perspective of the reflexive nature behaviour and communication within systems generally, and in this system in particular. Figure (9) was used in the explanation and exploration thereof because it highlights the mutuality of responsibility, that A does not **only** affect B, but is involved in affecting as is turn affected by both B and C.

Figure (9): Mutuality of responsibility



This theoretical concept was connected with practice in the consultants' discussion of what the data had revealed up to this stage. The concerns were listed as relationships, conflict, expectations, trust, tolerance and co-operation. We stressed the interconnectedness of each of these, how they were all two-way processes that required mutual effort and responsibility. The principal, for example was visibly taken aback by some of what he had heard. It was important that as consultants we acknowledged his claim that he had never intended to be rude and dismissive to his staff as they had described, however, it was important to understand that this was how his behaviour was being perceived. Our feedback to him was to remind him that communication depends on both how messages are intended as well as how they are received. The importance of illuminating and understanding projection processes as mutually constructed phenomena was highlighted by these interactions.

The educational psychologist is both practitioner and theoretician. The connection between theory and practice for the systems consultant must be an ever present one, which when appropriate, is made overt and explicit; this forms part of the developmental process that school systems consultation is.

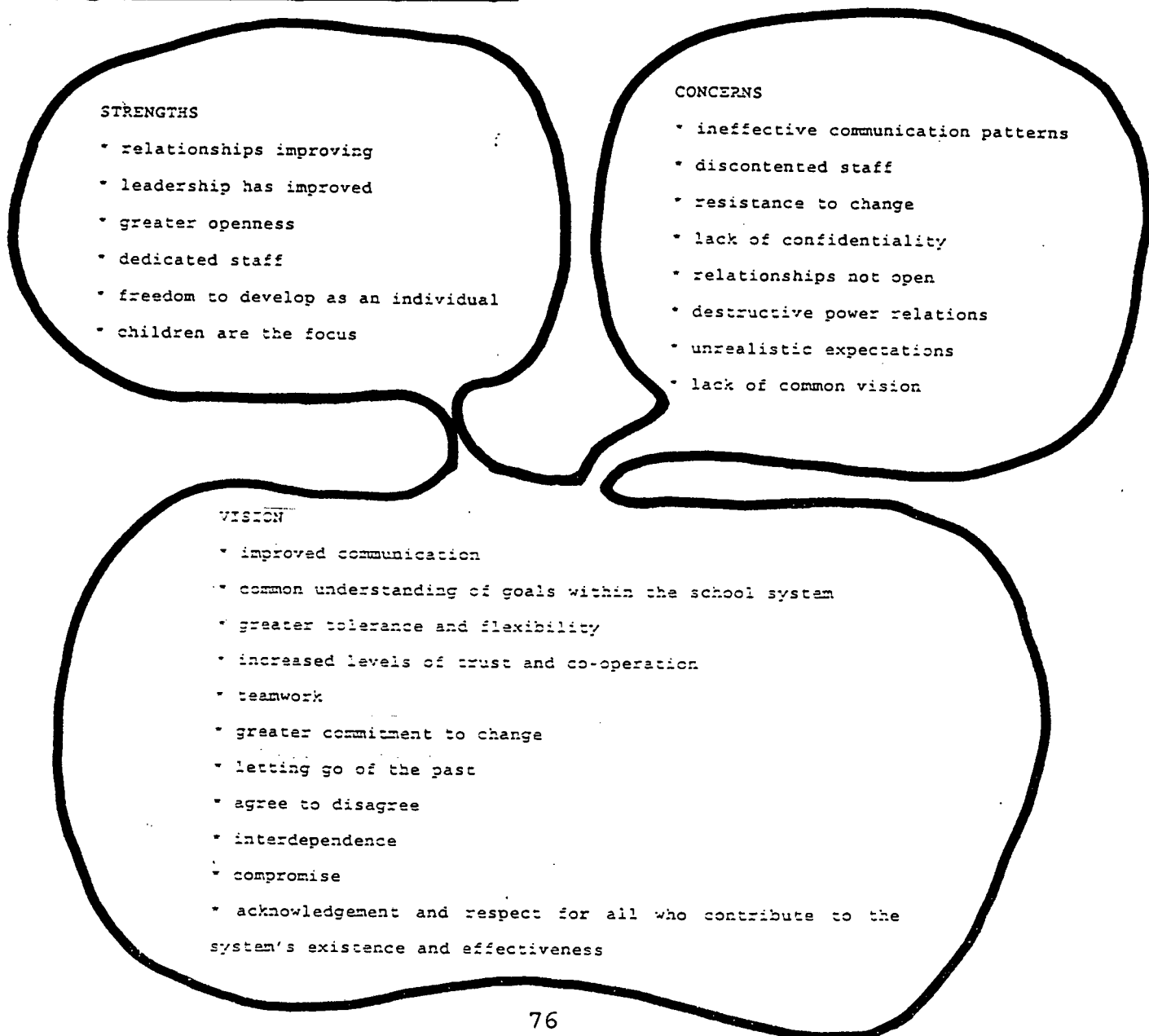
The conversation between management and the teachers was pursued and became apparent that individuals and groups were beginning to understand how their beliefs constrain the way they see themselves and their relationships. As Brookefield (1990) states, the result of an exploration of existing assumptions is the realisation that the ways of thinking and living which are currently adopted in the system are only options among a range of alternatives. Although this awareness was heightened within the focus group, people did not embrace change easily. Unlike the butterfly who trusts the skill and flutter of its wings, individuals and groups did not trust their own ability to think, behave, communicate and interact differently. This raised the issue how the system experienced and reacted to change.

EXPLORING CHANGE WITHIN THE SYSTEM

Systems theory argues the principle of self-organisation, which places the responsibility of development and change within the system (Bateson, 1973; Capra, 1983). It is the individuals and groups within a school system who initiate change - they are the ones who make the difference.

Figure (10) illustrates the importance of understanding the whole, of accounting for both the strengths and the limitations as perceived by the system before developing a vision of something new.

Figure (10): Exploring change



The fishbowl exercise which involved the teachers concluded with teachers expressing that perhaps there were certain things which could not be changed, and if that was the case, they needed to explore what had to be done to cope with things as they were. *The balance between change and stability*. This provided an entry point for the fishbowl exercise with management and teacher-assistants.

Earlier group processes and informal interviews with teacher-assistants had alerted the consultants to the level of helplessness and powerlessness that teacher-assistants were experiencing. The consultants gave a voice to this silenced group by enacting a role-play between two teacher-assistants at home. Such creativity enhances the quality and impact of the consultative process. Systems consultation demands that educational psychologists draw from their broad repertoire of skills, as well as their particular understanding and experience of schools and classrooms, in grappling with sensitive issues that emerge in the school.

The role-play had been constructed to raise issues which had emerged as themes in the analysis and interpretation of data; these included, salaries, racism in the school and the experience of domination and subjugation.

"We need a raise. R900 a month is not enough to make ends meet.";

"Am I a teacher-assistant or a cleaner - I refuse to be both!";

"Hire more cleaners or pay us more";

"Fine I'll do the cleaning, but don't make me stay until 4.30, let me go home when my work is done";

"It's so dangerous to travel home after half-past-four, last week my shoes were stolen".

"Just because we're black we're expected to do the dirty work!"

Management present included the principal, deputy principal and the head of department who co-ordinates the teacher-assistant

group. The three of them were asked to respond to the role-play by focusing on the notion of change:

- * What they could do?
- * What they would try to do?
- * What they could not do?

It was apparent that some clarity was needed around how flexible rules in the system were, which could be bypassed and which not. This exercise gave one a sense of how open those in the management sub-system were to change. Management remained firm, the message was clear, the rules were not negotiable. *It became apparent that although the initial mandate given to the consultants was to initiate change, the more open the process was, the more closed those in positions of power were becoming.*

Individuals explained that they were willing to listen, would try and negotiate but that in the end salary scales were laid down by the education department and so too were work hours.

Principal: Die salaris sk skaal word deur die departement neergele^e. Ek kan dit nie verander nie. Partykeer wens ek *ek* was self die ^here.

This helplessness and disempowered position adopted by the school's management in relation to their superiors was replicated in the relationship between teacher-assistants and management who was perceived as their immediate superior. This was identified as an isomorphism

The head of department shared with the teacher-assistants her own frustration at not being able to represent them effectively. She explained that although she empathised with them and understood their concerns, having witnessed the role-play made her aware that she was unable to communicate and negotiate assertively or passionately on their behalf, at management meetings. In essence, teacher-assistants needed to take responsibility and control of the change process - self-organisation and self-making in the system.

Consultants set a homework task for teacher-assistants. They had two weeks to elect an individual who would set up a meeting with the principal and deputy principal to discuss the proposal that a representative from the teacher-assistant sub-system attends management meetings and at this forum addresses some of their concerns. The consultants were challenging the low power position that the teacher-assistants appeared to be trapped in.

When the consultants returned two weeks later teacher-assistants reported that they had thought that it would be a waste of their time because management would never agree. Structures and procedures were perceived as rigid, static and impenetrable. Some said that they were scared that if they went ahead they would be accused of "revolting" and may lose their jobs as a result. This indicated to the consultants that within this system empowerment did not make one powerful. *So much is determined by what is valued in the system and here legitimate power was revered.*

In order to assess individual's commitment to change, people were asked to respond to the following question:

If things do not change will you leave the school?

Responses were to be kept to a "yes" or "no" and were handed in on a secret ballot. Fourteen out of the fifteen who voted, answered "yes". This indicated to the consultants the level of concern about and frustration with issues that impacted on those functioning within the school system. It was apparent that people held the perception that something dramatic would need to happen in order to shift the system.

Consultants explained the systems perspective of change, reminding the consultees that change is a complex process, that sometimes small events can have large effects, therefore small solutions for what are perceived as big problems. It was also noted that problems which took a long time to develop do not necessarily require long-term solutions (Checkland, 1981; Plas, 1986).

What remained crucial however, was that power had been consciously or unconsciously identified as central to exploring and initiating steps towards change and that the notion of power does not exist in a vacuum and is clearly a systemic issue.

POWER AS A SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE

Power was avoided as an issue by the system. People did not name it and this consequently resulted in individuals and groups experiencing great difficulty accepting and taking responsibility for its use.

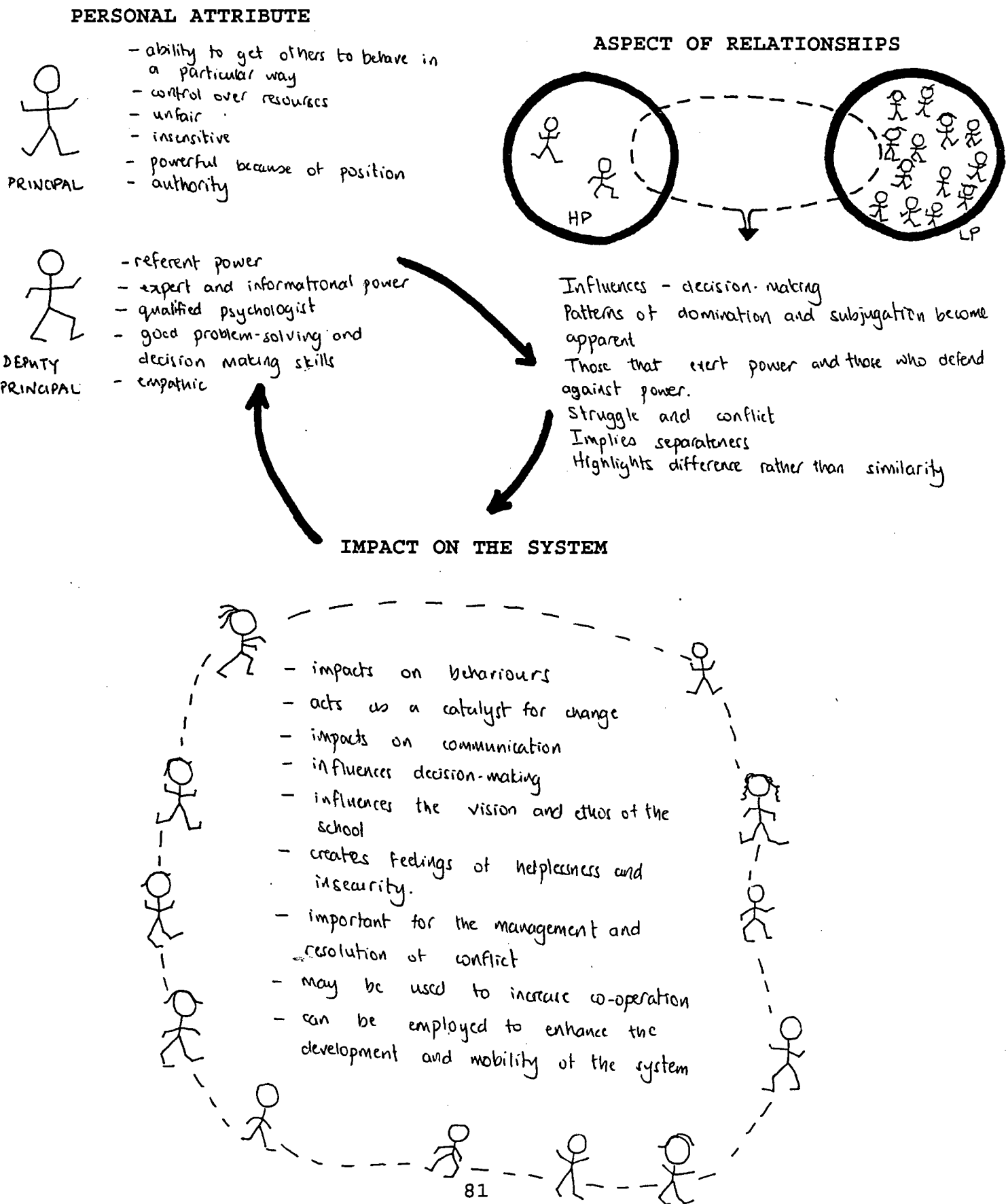
A group process exercise was facilitated by the consultants, the purpose of which was to highlight power as a substantive issue, and to explore how it impacted at various levels in the system. This points to the educational psychologist's role in uncovering blindspots in the system.

The teacher-assistant group was divided into two, with one group allocated position of power and the other described as the underpowered group in the system. The underpowered group was asked to elect a representative who would act as liaison between them and those in power. The power group was instructed to present a list of demands to the representative who was to take this back to her group for their information, **not** for negotiation. The consultants had constructed a causal chain and then observed as the process unfolded.

Johnson & Johnson (1991) explore the notion of power as it exists within a person, that is, as a personal attribute, and between people and groups, that is, as an aspect of relationships. Figure (11) illustrates an extension of their understanding and includes the idea that power impacts on the system. Power dynamics that emerged during the consultation process may be therefore be categorised into these three areas, namely power as a personal attribute, power as an aspect of relationship and power as it impacts the system as a whole. This highlights once again the

role of educational psychologist as theoretician in practice.

Figure (11): Power as a substantive issue



Salient issues were drawn out of Figure (11) and analysed.

Power as a personal attribute

- * expertise and informational bases of power are noted only in those who are in HP positions and tend to be ignored in those in LP positions
- * the system attaches little value to skills held by teacher-assistants
- * deputy principal presented as an example of how holding power increases one's ability to contribute, to challenge and change

Power in relationships

- * those in Hp positions are oblivious of the impact the use of power has on interactions with others
- * when power is shared unequally, frustration and fear marks the relationship
- * those in low power positions are paralysed and refuse to take action, because they believe that they have no retaliatory ability

Power in the system

- * those who are subjugated find it extremely difficult to assert themselves and consequently retain the position of victim
- * the disempowered will be silent until they leap to the other extreme and rebel
- "We won't do it!"
- "We'll go on strike!"
- "We'll all resign!"
- * once given an opportunity to reflect on what they were achieving, levelling the playing fields became the objective. Negotiation and discussion were key processes given the acknowledgement of common goals and visions.
- * if the system is disempowered, whether one is in a high power or low power position there is always a feeling of helplessness

The consultation process highlighted high power and low power positions, as discussed by Johnson & Johnson (1991), as they exist within the system. The aim was to heighten awareness of the positions that individuals and groups within the system adopt and to explore ways of stepping out of these. Teacher assistants were, for example, made aware that they too possess power in the system even though it is covert and unstated. Individuals and groups were made aware of the way in which the system's effectiveness was undermined as a consequence of the use of legitimate power. Members of the system believed that the principal ought to have power because of his position and responsibilities, and consequently disempowered themselves. Expert and informational bases of power, as described in Forsyth (1990), tended to be understated and even ignored because power was perceived negatively and generally understood as implying authority and control.

The perception of powerlessness and dependency was overwhelming. The system maintained an external locus of control, investing a great deal of power in the consultants to effect change. This raised questions about the consultees' commitment to dual responsibility as it had been outlined during the contracting phase, for although the educational psychologist possesses particular skill, expertise and authority, the consultees' ownership of the change process is crucial. Individuals and groups were hesitant, even unwilling, to acknowledge the role they could play in their own development. It became crucial to shift the locus of control rather than keeping people on their back feet, especially given that the consultation process was drawing to a close. Table (9) lists the recommendations to facilitate ongoing change and development of the system. It refers also to aspects that should be maintained, thereby acknowledging the need for balance between stability and change.

Table (9): Recommendations for change

1. There is a need for a linkage between management and the teacher-assistants. This could be done via the creation of certain structures:

- * a team consisting of a representative of the teacher-assistants and a head of department
- * regular scheduled meetings of a forum which includes the above-mentioned team and management

Important processes to consider would be:

- * the need for negotiation
- * consideration of all existing options
- * consultation with other groups where necessary
- * to acknowledge power differences between groups and not to use it in a counter-productive way
- * encouraging open communication

2. Growth would be encouraged by staff participation in workshops on the following issues:

- * conflict resolution
- * communication and negotiation skills

3. Organisational development would be encouraged if greater clarification existed around the roles people are expected to play within the school. A detailed job description needs to be worked on, drawing from as many resources as possible.

4. A meeting between the governing body and two representatives from each subsystem needs to take place.

5. It would help if contact was established with other schools where things are done differently, reflecting on shared experiences and implementing ideas which have worked elsewhere.

6. It must be acknowledged that work in special schools produce stress and tension. A suggestion would be to set up a support group where members have an opportunity to share freely both positive and negative experiences. The facilitator of such a group could be drawn from inside or outside the system.

7. It would benefit the whole system if its members take note of each other's strengths, positive feelings and experiences in order to create an ethos of greater trust and acceptance.
8. Support, praise and encouragement need to replace the existing emphasis on the negative, critical approach, which is disempowering.
9. The need to develop joint aims and goals for the school by reformulating the existing mission statement, such that it takes cognizance of all members of the system.
10. Working towards more realistic goals, which imply the acceptance of a "good-enough" school rather than waiting for the "perfect" school to be created.

CONCLUSION

De Jong (1995) asks what role does age, gender, race and status play in the influence potential of the consultant? He goes on to argue that these variables are often used in judging the credibility of education consultants in the South African context. Historical factors still continue in the post-apartheid era to impact on the values of schools and their communities.

This position was confirmed for us as young, black women who worked as consultants in a predominantly white school. Issues that were highlighted in our reflections on our own process included:

- * Needing to be careful not to get "sucked" into the system, by giving in to feelings of allegiance to teachers and teacher-assistants who were described as downtrodden and unappreciated. Falling into this trap may result in disempowering those groups rather than facilitating their growth and development.

- * Being black led to the assumption by certain groups that the consultants were taking sides with those sub-system who were black and (coincidentally) also suppressed.

* Young and black in South Africa equals "youth", which in turn implies revolutionary. Those in power what the consultants were doing as "stirring", and labelled them as "die opstokers". Those who found themselves disempowered in the system, related to the consultants as if they were union representatives, there was therefore the expectation that consultants would fight on their behalf.

* Given that those in power positions at the school were older white men, as they are in many South African schools, the consultants found themselves moving between being completely autonomous to expecting and requesting feedback on how the process was perceived to be impacting on the school.

In terms of school systems consultation as a dimension of educational psychology service delivery, this chapter has illuminated some of the implications and challenges within the South African context. These include such issues and questions as:

- * Who is the consultant? Who should form part of the consultancy team?
- * With whom does the consultant make the first contact?
- * Which individuals and groups participate in the contracting process?
- * The time and effort it takes for the educational psychologist to spend quality time at schools.
- * How can educational psychologists optimally use those skills which form part of their broad repertoire?
- * Willingness to step down from the position of expert and authority, and enter into a less hierarchical relationship with clients.
- * The importance of insight and creativity in educational psychology practice.
- * Being able to stand outside of the dynamics that play themselves out in the system - not getting "sucked" in.
- * Recognising that the educational psychologist is both

theoretician and practitioner.

The educational psychologist, if s/he intends to incorporate school systems consultation as a dimension of service delivery, must be able to trust the skill and flutter of her/his wings.

CHAPTER FIVE: ISSUES AND THEMES FOR REFLECTION

ISOMORPHISM

The findings in this study confirm how crucial going beyond the walls of the classroom and the fences of the schoolground is. The isomorphic pattern which emerged in the consultation process assisted the research-practice team in obtaining a richer understanding of the system with which they were engaging. It also provided a holistic perspective of the dynamics which mark educational psychology in South Africa.

Difficulties that were experienced by the system were very similar to political patterns and processes which existed outside of the system. Connections were apparent in the analysis as well as in strategies formulated and interventions engaged in. These are illustrated in the table that follows.

SCHOOL SYSTEMS CONSULTATION AS A PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT

It is often assumed that complex systems, like schools can haul themselves up by their own bootstraps. Consultative work entails empowering people, sharing skills and building their capacity to grapple with issues and understand dynamics. Although the consultation process is concluded with termination of the relationship between consultant and the school, the developmental process which the system engages in is an ongoing one. The consultant acts as a catalyst even at the very end, and hands over a set of guidelines, directives and reflections about change which may be embraced or ignored by the system. What this illuminates is the choice made by the system to harness its energy and break through the "edge of chaos" or breakdown.

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Some hesitance and reluctance on the part of the school system was noted and may be attributed to:

- * the school's difficulty in embracing the systems

SOUTH AFRICA

A country in the process of transformation

A vision of change for the better

People have not let go of the past. Remembrance of the horror of Apartheid

The need to move forward

How can policy-makers and citizens together contribute to reconstruction and development?

Many different political parties contest elections and compete for power

Race, culture, class and gender still determine your status in society

The masses are embittered as a consequence of experiences of discrimination, inequality and injustice

Thoughts and feelings about voting for a particular political party are important, however the grain of truth lies in putting the cross on the ballot

There are many who would prefer for things to remain as they are. Those who are resistant to change

In order to win support, politicians need to connect with people at grassroots level

Many who have been disadvantaged expect that leaders will solve problems overnight

Some people choose to leave the country rather than live with the chaos and the change

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES

Services in the process of transformation

Developing a vision of something new and different

Practitioners recall the inequity which marked service delivery

Recognition of the need to move forward

How can service providers and referral agents shape the new service?

Practitioners with different theoretical and practice biases compete for power and control

Race and educational qualification determines your status in the service

The masses are embittered as a consequence of experiences of discrimination, inequality and injustice

Thoughts and feelings about particular paradigms are important, however the grain of truth lies in the delivery of the educational psychology service

There are many who would prefer for things to remain as they are. Those who are resistant to change

In order to win support, it is crucial that policy-makers consult at grassroots level

Those who have been disadvantaged expect ~~the~~ the system to deliver immediately

There are those who have chosen to resign rather than grapple with the change

THE SCHOOL

In the process of transformation

Expressing a need for change

People have not let go of the past. Memories of how things used to be

Looking to the future

How can all the members of the school system contribute to achieve this new vision

Various groups striving for recognition, competing for power

Race, culture, class, education and qualification determine your status at the school

Disempowered groups are embittered

Irrespective of how strongly you think and feel about the need for change within the school system, unless you act and do something little is achieved

There are many who would prefer for things to remain as they are. Those who are resistant to change

To ensure the effective functioning of the school, management need to consult, negotiate and interact with all levels of staff

Disempowered groups expect outsiders to solve their problems quickly

Some individuals considered the possibility of resigning rather than investing energy in the change and development of the school system

methodology. The old patterns are so much easier - to blame, to point fingers, to focus on part rather than the whole.

- * the fact that the systems consultation process analyses and often challenges the status quo, and in this system there was indeed an experience of perturbation

- * individuals and systems were at differing points of "readiness" to engage in such a process

- * the reality that the end result of the consultation process was not equally pleasing across subsystems within the school, as it seldom is.

- * the "paranoia" amongst those in positions of power, since the consultants learnt more about the system than management was aware of.

THE FUTURE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICE

as a task of the educational psychologist
School systems consultation connects with the principles as well as the policy options outlined in such documents as the White Paper (GNU, 1995), NEPI Framework Report (NECC, 1994) and the Policy framework for education and training (ANC, 1994). The focus on empowerment and development in education, on both the system and the individual-in-context, on prevention as well as cure, bodes well for consideration as a dimension of educational psychology service delivery.

Efforts to increase readiness for change are however necessary, both at the level of schools as systems and the educational psychologists who need to begin to work as consultants. The implications for accepting school systems consultation as a dimension of educational psychology service delivery include the need for pre- and in-service training to be shaped to include theory and practice around group process dynamics, systems theory, personal and interpersonal skills and other relevant

content areas. This will assist in the implementation of school systems consultation as an appropriate service delivery option in the South African context.

The fact that systems consultation functions to assess the status quo and works towards improving the systems functioning. There is likely to be some upset and perturbation of the system and extremely stressed systems (and South African schools are currently under great stress) tend not to welcome consultants with open arms. It is only through practice and infusion into the way people and entire systems think and behave, that this new way of thinking and practice will be owned both by those who deliver services as well as the recipients thereof. Consultation as a form of educational psychology practice is relatively new, this implies that people are apprehensive and doubtful of its efficacy.

The "quick fix" has always been a more attractive option for clients, and sometimes even for practitioners. School systems consultation is by definition a long-range, preventive, educative, ecological, empowering and developmental strategy. If used effectively it will reduce the clinical press, however, only over the next few years.

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APPENDIX

- * Meetings: structured opportunities for discussion
- * Observation: taking note without necessarily participating
- * Interviews: Formal or informal discussions structured by the interviewer
- * Engaging in informal social contact
- * Facilitation of group process: construction of an exercise or interaction that is participative and includes intervention.
- * Fishbowl exercise: group is divided into two and need to arrange themselves in two concentric circles. Turns are taken for the outside circle to observe the inner circle in an interaction or engaged in a discussion and vice versa
- * Role-play and simulation: situations are enacted by participants who adopt the perceived attitude and behaviour of the person they are playing
- * Homework task: similar to teaching situations, the facilitator provides the participants with opportunities to practice and learn while s/he is away
- * Questionnaires: structured lists of questions that participants are expected to respond to in writing
- * Telephonic contact: Opportunities for the consultant to contact the consultee and vice versa, without necessitating a visit to the school
- * Modelling: presenting attitudes and behaviours which others can emulate
- * Reflection: revisiting and learning from what has happened during and after an experience

TASK FOR "INSIDE" OBSERVERS

Your role as observers is to provide a written record of your observations, focusing on the following processes as they occur within your school:

1. Decision-making
2. Communication
3. Conflict

Information may be obtained from a variety of sources, including:

- * staff meetings
- * informal settings, eg. staff-room, playground, sportsfield, etc.
- * extra-curricular-activities
- * conversations, discussions

Date of submission: _____

QUESTIONNAIRE

Respond to each of the words listed below in terms of your experience of each at school. It is important that you reflect on both the strengths and limitations.

CHILDREN

DISCIPLINE

SPORT

ACADEMICS

CONFLICT

STAFF

SUPPORT

COMMUNICATION

CARE

POWER

DECISION-MAKING